

The University of Chicago

THE VIOLATION OF THE DRAMATIC
ILLUSION IN THE COMEDIES
OF ARISTOPHANES

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF GREEK LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE

1936

By
HARRY LLOYD STOW

Private Edition, Distributed by
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PREFACE

When one reads the plays of Aristophanes, he is increasingly aware that the dramatic setting is frequently disturbed. For again and again remarks are made to and about the audience. In making a study of these passages in an effort to understand and explain that which, though a prevalent characteristic of Aristophanes, is almost unique in dramatic literature, I soon discovered that these remarks are predominantly satirical and abusive. The spectators are directly addressed in criticism, oftentimes bitter and always bantering, of contemporary movements, of public institutions, of the audience as a group, and especially of prominent or notorious individuals of the day present in the theatre. As a result, my study of this violation of the dramatic illusion, as it is oftentimes called, centered primarily upon the use of direct abuse in Old Comedy. For remarks concerned merely with the play as a play and the details of play production are greatly in the minority.

The metrical translation of Rogers has been used throughout. The scholia referred to in various sections may most easily be found in Rutherford's edition.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to Professors Gertrude Smith and Robert J. Bonner for many helpful suggestions and much valuable advice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. MODERN THEORIES ON THE ORIGIN OF COMEDY	13
III. PRIMITIVE CEREMONIES CONTAINING ABUSE	16
IV. DIRECT ADDRESS TO THE AUDIENCE	22
A. Remarks in the <u>Peace</u>	22
B. Abusive Remarks <u>in the</u> Other Plays	31
C. Non-abusive Remarks	47
V. THE EFFECT OF ARISTOPHANIC SATIRE	57

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

"In Athens freedom of speech was one of the corner-stones of democracy. Appreciation and praise of it constitute a commonplace in the literature. Freedom of speech is the prerogative of the free man."¹ A comic poet speaks of it as the most prized and cherished possession of every individual:

ἄρ' οἴσῃ, ὅτι τῆς πενίας ὄπλον παρρησία
ταύτην ἔάν τις ἀπολέσῃ, τὴν ἀσπίδ' (ἀν)
οὗτος ἀποβέβληκεν βίου.²

This freedom of speech extended through all phases of Athenian life, the assembly, the law-court, the theatre. In some of these places it was restricted to a certain extent; but in the theatre in the comic dramas of the Fifth century it found its fullest expression.

If there was παρρησία anywhere in Athens, it existed on the comic stage. There neither position nor reputation saved a man from bitter and violent abuse, and Athenians heard with patience not only attacks upon their polity but the mockery of their most cherished beliefs.³

The audience, made up of the body of Athenian citizens, bore not only with patience but with good-natured indulgence and enjoyment the severest ridicule, the bitterest satire and most flagrant lampooning of the institutions to which they were deeply attached

¹ R. J. Bonner, Aspects of Athenian Democracy, p. 67; cf. Cam. Anc. Hist., V, 139.

² Nicostratus in Meineke, Com. Graec. Frag., p. 474, No. 5.

³ Max Radin, "Freedom of Speech in Ancient Athens," AJP, XLVIII (1927), 217.

and of the leaders whom they admired the most. "Free speech," says Capps,¹ "was as the breath of life to political comedy." And the result was a drama of brilliant wit, of uproarious and at the same time penetrating satire, the passing of which causes Grote to remark with regret,² "Never probably will the full and unshackled force of comedy be so exhibited again."

Our knowledge of Old Comedy is gained almost entirely from the eleven extant plays of Aristophanes. The scanty remains of the works of the many other poets of this period are practically valueless; sometimes we have a fragmentary line or two, more often it is a single word. A study of these fragments, of whose context we know nothing, is a very dangerous business and conclusions which are drawn entirely from these sources are apt to be partially, if not wholly, erroneous. This material is of value only when it supports and strengthens ideas found in Aristophanes. The study of Aristophanes, on the other hand, is a different matter. Here we have complete plays presented over a period of some thirty-five years. It is true that he is a single poet, presenting of necessity the style, the views, the dramatic and literary technique of a single individual. That he was no common poet is well-attested by his fame during his lifetime, when he was recognized by his contemporaries as an outstanding, even superlative artist. But it is quite wrong to assume that he was therefore unique. He made certain innovations, created certain new standards, but by and large he was representative of his time, conforming to the taste of his audience and the customs and rules of contemporary drama. When he departed too radically from

¹"Greek Comedy" in Columbia University Lectures on Greek Literature, p. 136.

²History of Greece, VIII, 329.

the traditional style and mode of the day, as he evidently did in the first presentation of the Clouds, the audience refused to give him the prize, and the poet, brought quickly to time, re-wrote the play, making full concession to popular taste.¹ It is safe, therefore, to assume that conclusions drawn from a study of the plays of Aristophanes would prove generally true had we in our possession today more of the vast wealth of vanished dramas of Fifth century comedy.

"Without having Aristophanes actually before us, it would have been impossible to imagine the unmeasured and unsparing license of attack assumed by the Old Comedy upon the gods, the institutions, the politicians, philosophers, poets, private citizens specially named, and even the women, whose life was entirely domestic, of Athens."² This rich satire, however, was by no means original with Aristophanes. Cratinus, the earliest poet of Old Comedy of whom we know, is said to have introduced political satire. This poet belonged to the ultra-conservative party, was an ardent admirer of Cimon whom he considered the ideal aristocrat, and was a bitter enemy of Pericles whom he ridiculed especially in a play called Dionysalexander. Hermippus and Telecleides, contemporary rivals of Cratinus, also were bitter assailants of Pericles, the leading statesman and popular idol of the day. Pericles is only one, though perhaps the most outstanding, example of a prominent figure who suffered ridicule at the hands of the comic poets in the early days of comedy. And so it resulted that Aristophanes, when he began writing, came into a rich heritage of personal invective which he used to the greatest advantage. He made his attacks all the more pungent by tempering them oftentimes

¹Cf. Rogers, Intro. to Clouds, pp. xi ff.

²Grote, op. cit., p. 329.

with good-humored raillery and banter. Cratinus had been almost Archilochian in his unswerving bitterness of abuse. Aristophanes employed subtlety and wit, although when he wished he could be broadly and directly vicious as well.¹

This satire is used by Aristophanes in various ways. It is sometimes incorporated in the entire plot of a play, as the war party is ridiculed in the Acharnians, the new education in the Clouds, and Athenian judicial procedure and litigiousness in the Wasps. Or again it may be levelled at a well-known citizen by modelling a prominent character in the play upon the living individual, as Socrates appears in the Clouds and Cleon in the Knights. Or special ridicule may be concentrated in a single scene in a play, as Meton, the astronomer, Iris, and through Iris the Olympian gods, and Cinesias, the popular dithyrambic poet, are ridiculed in various episodic scenes in the Birds. The satire of these three types is always contained within the dramatic action of the play itself, is a vital element in the plot. Even the episodic scenes, oftentimes somewhat disconnected from each other, serve to emphasize still further the main satire of the play. The ridiculing remarks, although they may refer to living Athenians in the audience, are made by one actor to another, speaking in the role which he portrays. The dramatic action is self-contained and unbroken.

Sometimes, however, a very different thing happens. An actor upon the stage turns to the audience and makes an insulting or ridiculing or jesting remark either about the spectators as a group or about certain definite individuals in their midst. Suddenly and without warning the actor has destroyed the illusion of

¹Cf. Platonius in Kaibel, Comicorum Graecorum Fragmenta, I, 6.

the play as a dramatic picture in which the spectator takes part only through his emotional reaction to the developments on the stage, developments in which the spectator plays no part and which would go on with or without his presence. Now, abruptly, the actor has recognized the existence of the onlookers and has spoken directly to them. No longer is the play an impersonal drama of daily or imaginary life going on before the spectator's eyes. That illusion has been violated and the onlooker is suddenly aware that he is in a theatre, viewing a dramatic performance in which actors on a stage are portraying imaginary roles.

Such a result may in one way be considered undesirable. It may be felt that the effect of the drama is weakened by the break in dramatic tension. But on the other hand, another situation has been created. In a casual, informal, almost naive fashion, the audience has been drawn into the dramatic action, has become a part of the play. And at the same time the poet of comic satire has achieved something which is to him of the greatest importance. For satire, when it is thus used, has reached one of its highest forms. A remark, for example, is insulting enough when one actor says to another, "Our situation is indeed perilous. But I will be brave, although I would drop my shield and flee if I were Cleonymus," naming a notorious coward of the day. But if he says instead, "Our situation is indeed perilous. But I will be brave, although I would drop my shield and flee if I were--you, Cleonymus," turning to the audience and speaking directly to the man named, the remark, heightened by the change from third to second person, has become doubly insulting, doubly pointed--and doubly amusing as well. No matter how it is viewed, such a remark does of necessity violate the dramatic illusion. But the additional humor thus gained is perhaps the principal reason why

this device survived from the earliest crude performances down through the finished comedies of the Fifth century.

It is only this last type of satire which will be discussed in the following pages, satire which is spoken directly to the spectators and is often termed a violation of the dramatic illusion. This is only one phase of all the satire of Aristophanes, it must be remembered. The poet's ridicule is much wider in scope and much more prevalent in his work than the comparatively small number of passages which will be treated here. But the open, direct address to the spectators forms a distinctive characteristic of the comedy of this period. And Aristophanes used this address in an artistic and subtle fashion. Generally it is confined to a single remark or a brief exchange of remarks, for its very unexpectedness gives it greater value as a mirth-provoking device. Occasionally, however, an entire scene is played at the expense of the audience. And the Parabasis is always delivered entirely to the spectators.

The Parabasis is a feature of the plays of Old Comedy. It is an elaborate, non-dramatic performance near the middle of the play, during which the actors leave the stage and the chorus, stepping forward, delivers a direct address to the audience, setting forth the poet's views on art, literature, politics, and other questions of the day. All dramatic illusion is dropped, especially in the first half of the speech where the chorus acts only as the mouth-piece of the poet. In the second half the chorus as a rule speaks more in keeping with the character which it portrays in the play, flavoring its statements throughout with much personal invective. This performance, generally considered a definite break in the dramatic structure, is of a slightly different nature from the unexpected satirical remarks of the actors

previously mentioned. It serves almost as an intermission in the play, a transition between the preceding closely-knit plot with its "agon" or contest and the succeeding series of looser, episodic scenes. Many modern writers believe that originally this speech was either a prologue or, more probably, an epilogue to the original, primitive comedy.¹ For in the Comus, or rustic revel, there came a moment when the leader of the troupe harangued the people about things in general. As time went on, the poet endeavored to bring this traditional speech into closer connection with his plot, but it always remained a direct address to the audience.² "The Parabasis or 'topical song,' so marked an element of Old Comedy, was probably the lineal descendant of the rude lampoon."³ And as such these speeches must be viewed in the same light as the other direct remarks to the spectators and must be included in the following discussion.

This element of direct address to the audience is by no means limited to the plays of Aristophanes and other poets of Old Comedy. It continues through Fourth century comedy, occurs in the plays of Plautus and Terence, and is found in Continental and English drama. But its character has changed; it has become largely a mechanical device, used to make amusing appeals or furnish explanation to the spectators, or it has developed into a humorous comment-aside on the action of the play itself. The un-

¹Cf. Zielinski, Die Gliederung der Altattischen Komödie, pp. 183-87; A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, Dithyramb, Tragedy, and Comedy, p. 297; G. Norwood, Greek Comedy, pp. 11-12; F. M. Cornford, The Origin of Attic Comedy, pp. 129 ff. P. W. Harsh, in TAPA, LXV, 197, cf. pp. 178-97, points out, however, that no matter what was the original position of the Parabasis, its location in the plays of Aristophanes is "artistically advisable and necessary from a dramatic standpoint."

²Pickard-Cambridge, op. cit., p. 297.

³W. Ridgeway, Dramas and Dramatic Dances, p. 403; cf. CAH, V, 138.

abashed satire and invective has vanished. And always these later remarks are to the audience as a whole, never to a single, named individual. The cause of this development, aside from social changes and increasing restrictions upon dramatic freedom of speech through the centuries, is very simple--namely, the circumstances under which a dramatic performance was produced at Athens in the Fifth century B.C.

Dramas were performed at Athens upon only two occasions during the entire year, at the City Dionysia and at the Lenaea, two festivals in honor of Dionysus, the wine-god. For three days at each of these festivals tragedies and comedies were presented under the supervision of the state, which chose the competing poets and awarded a prize according to the decision of a board of publicly appointed judges. Only new plays could be presented and they were performed only once.¹

The details of the Lenaea, and in fact even the exact location in which this festival was celebrated, are not known for certain. But it undoubtedly paralleled, on a smaller scale, the larger and more important City Dionysia, concerning which our information is much more complete. The dramatic performances at this festival were presented in the great open-air theatre of Dionysus on the south slope of the Acropolis. Nearly twenty thousand people could be accommodated here, and every Athenian citizen of any rank whatsoever was entitled to be present, along with any strangers who might be visiting in the city at the time. The small gate fee was paid by the state for those citizens who

¹ Cf. A. E. Haigh, The Attic Theatre (3rd ed., 1907), pp. 1 ff., and R. C. Flickinger, The Greek Theatre and Its Drama, pp. 119 ff., for the details of play production.

could not afford the admission price.¹ Consequently it resulted that the audience consisted of the majority of the citizens. "The audience to which the Athenian dramatic poet addressed himself was in reality a gathering of the whole body of his fellow-countrymen."² And although nominally the prize for the best play was awarded by the board of chosen judges, in reality it was the audience who made the decision. For the spectators "did not hesitate to mark their approval or disapproval of a performance. Their attitude could not have failed to influence the judges, so that in a sense the final verdict regarding the respective merits of the poets chosen by the archon was really the verdict of the audience, which was not a select group of playgoers but a cross-section of the populace of Athens."³

Certain seats in the front rows were reserved for priests and public officials; all the rest of the seats could be occupied by the first spectators to arrive. It is not generally realized, however, how large was the number of reserved seats.⁴ The priest

¹Originally the admission to the theatre was free. The scramble for seats caused so much confusion, however, that a price was set of two obols per seat. Toward the end of the Fifth century the poor complained of the expense and accused the rich of purchasing all the seats, and the state created a "theoric" fund from which the two obols charge was paid to any registered citizen who applied in person. For a time only the poor availed themselves of this privilege, but soon all the citizens were applying for the admission price, and the theoric fund became a great burden upon the state. Cf. Haigh, op. cit., pp. 329-34.

²Haigh, op. cit., p. 4.

³Bonner, op. cit., pp. 120-21.

⁴No definite statement can be made about reserved seats in the Fifth century, since the inscriptions in the theatre at Athens are from the later rebuilding in the time of Hadrian. These inscriptions (IG², II, 5022-5164), however, show that seats were assigned to particular individuals as far back as the twenty-fourth tier from the front, which might indicate as many as two thousand reserved seats. Haigh (op. cit., p. 336), supporting himself by references in the literary sources, says, "There can be little doubt that the arrangement of reserved seats was much the same in its general character during the period of the Athenian democracy."

of Dionysus occupied the seat of honor directly in the center, behind the altar of his god. Other priests and religious officers, of whom there were many in the city, filled the seats on both sides of him. The nine archons and the ten generals were assigned to prominent seats in the front. All ambassadors from foreign states were similarly honored. The judges of the dramatic contest sat together in a body and, as Haigh says, "would naturally be provided with one of the best places in the theatre."¹ And the distinction of proedria, or front seat in the theatre, was conferred by the state upon the orphan sons of men who had fallen in battle, and upon all public benefactors. In the latter case this privilege was hereditary, to be enjoyed by the eldest male member of the family.² All these people, priests, public officials, ambassadors, state guests, sons of war heroes, and especially public benefactors and descendants of public benefactors honored by proedria, would make up no small number of spectators. They would occupy definitely assigned seats in the very front of the theatre, where they would be most easily recognized both by the actors and by the remainder of the audience. And they would probably include in their group, under one classification or another, the majority of the prominent citizens of Athens.

But not only were certain seats reserved for definite individuals. It appears that certain groups of citizens were assigned to special portions of the auditorium. Members of the

¹Ibid.

²The presence of women in the theatre in the Fifth century has been a much discussed question. Haigh (ibid., pp. 324ff.) says that women were certainly admitted; Merry (note on Peace 966) believes "There was no law excluding women but the secluded life to which most of them were accustomed . . . made their attendance the exception rather than the rule; Rogers (Intro. to the Ecclesiastusae, p. xxix-xxxv) has a long discussion on the subject and reaches the conclusion that no women were present. Rogers' argument appears the soundest and is accepted in the present discussion.

Council of Five Hundred occupied a particular section, and the Ephebi, or youths between eighteen and twenty years of age, occupied another.¹ It may be that undistinguished foreigners had a special place.² And Haigh suggests that each tribe occupied an individual wedge or block of seats formed by the aisles which ran upwards from the orchestra. There were thirteen of these wedges, and the writer says that possibly these were reserved separately for the ten tribes, the Council, the Ephebi, and Foreigners.³

Another point should be remembered. Although the population of Athens in the Fifth century cannot be determined with any degree of exactness, most writers on the subject agree on 30,000 as the number of free male citizens above eighteen years of age in the time of Pericles.⁴ For various reasons, however, as large a number as 50,000 has been accepted by some.⁵ To the number of citizens must be added the metics, whose number is even more uncertain but must have totaled many thousand, and the visitors, many of whom came to Athens especially for the City Dionysia. But the total of even the largest figures for citizens, metics, and visitors appears very small when compared with the populations of the great cities of today. The group attending the dramatic productions would be the majority of the active Athenian citizens, the political, business, as well as the literary men. They undoubtedly knew each other; they were certainly acquainted with

¹Schol. on Birds 795.

²Alexis in Meineke, op. cit., p. 527, No. XXV, 1.

³Op. cit., p. 337 with bibliography; cf. pp. 334-41 for a complete discussion of the distribution of seats.

⁴Thuc. ii. 13; A. Böckh, Staatsh. der Athener, pp. 42 ff.; Beloch, Bevölkerung der griechisch-romanische Welt, pp. 100-101; Sandys, note on Arist. Const. of Athens lxii. 3; J. W. Headlam, Election by Lot at Athens, pp. 50, 83.

⁵Gomme, Pop. of Athens in Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C., p. 34.

their more important fellows. They would recognize and appreciate to the full all remarks pertaining to one of their number. This made much easier the task of the dramatic writer. For the poet, when writing his play, could with more than a fair degree of certainty rely upon the presence of the living personages whom he satirized; the actor, when speaking the lines, would probably know in what section, and perhaps in what seat, in the theatre the individual of whom he spoke was sitting. He at least made a pretense of knowing this, for deictic pronouns and adverbs are frequently used. Upon the many thousands of spectators the effect of such a word with its accompanying gesture would be the same, whether the speaker was pointing to the actual man he named or not. It is in this respect that the ancient theatre differs the most from the theatre of today. Modern dramas, written in the hope of many performances before an ever-changing audience, cannot possibly contain the wealth of personal allusion which they did in ancient Athens. In the present day political satire may deal with personages of national or world fame whose names and characteristics are familiar to the average spectator. Actors on the vaudeville stage frequently assure the success of their jokes by changing certain names to fit men of prominence in the city in which they are appearing. But the modern dramatist or actor cannot hope to add pungent flavor to his satirical remarks by the consciousness of the certain presence of his victim. The ancient poet, on the other hand, wrote a play which would have but a single performance, a single performance, however, which would be presented before a thoroughly representative audience of his day and before the very men of whom he spoke. One of the great achievements of Greek literature is that of Aristophanes who, although writing plays abounding in personalities and allusions to his own city and fellow-citizens, still created dramas whose appeal is eternal.

CHAPTER II
MODERN THEORIES OF THE ORIGIN OF COMEDY

The question of the origin of Greek comedy is one of the most debated points in classical philology. Even the ancients who wrote on this subject could not agree among themselves. But there is one point upon which all writers, ancient and modern, are in accord, namely, the importance of ridicule and abuse of the onlookers in the primitive ceremonies and celebrations from which comedy developed. Aristotle¹ says, "Comedy originated with the leaders of the phallic songs which are still in use in many of our cities." This statement has been the basis for many of the theories of modern writers. Flickinger,² following Aristotle, says, "The *komos* was the particular type of phallic ceremony from which comedy developed." In the *komos* the participants indulged freely in bitter abuse of individuals; "these scurrilous attacks upon their neighbors combined with other motives to induce the *komos* revelers to assume disguises which varied from year to year." A combination of this *komos* with the actors of Dorian mimes or farces resulted in Attic comedy.

Navarre³ thinks that the *komos* which gave rise to comedy was a phallic *komos*, such as Semos describes;⁴ that the dispute began when the revellers began to chaff the bystanders; that the

¹Poetics 1449 A.

²Op. cit., pp. 36 ff.

³"Les Origines et la Structure Technique de la Comedie Ancienne," Rev. Et. Anc., XIII (1911), 245 ff.

⁴Athenaeus 622 B (xiv. 16); cf. infra, pp. 17 f.

latter produced their champion, and so the brawl arose, and, as they calmed down, the debate.

Cornford's theory¹ is that comedy and tragedy arose from the same ritual, that of the agon, pathos or death, and resurrection of an "Eniautos-Daimon." He finds the nucleus of comedy in the phallic ceremonies consisting of (1) a procession of worshippers of Phales, (2) a sacrifice, and (3) a phallic song, or comus hymn, consisting of (a) invocation and induction of the god's influence or spirit, and (b) magical abuse or expulsion of evil, as shown by an improvisational "iambic" element of obscene ribaldry, which often took the form of satire directed against individuals by name.

Gilbert Norwood² summarizes his discussion of primitive celebrations with these words:

From these evidences we conceive this strange and elaborate type of comedy to have arisen as follows. In Attica the universal folk-mummary took the form of an animal masquerade attached as comus to the worship of Dionysus as god of the vinous revel. Their phallic procession sang lampoons against chance bystanders, sometimes more elaborately against public characters. At first their performance, or at any rate their remarks, were impromptu; later a poet wrote lines for them.

Pickard-Cambridge³ reconstructs a non-phallic comus native to Athens, a sort of animal masquerade, in the course of which some kind of contest developed, and in which it had become customary to conclude with addresses, no doubt in part satirical or jesting, to those standing by. This Attic comus was the source of the epirrhetic scenes in Old Comedy, while the iambic scenes with character types, realistic scenes from ordinary life, mythological travesty, and a peculiar costume came from Dorian sources.

Ridgeway⁴ says, "In Athens there was the same irresistible

¹Op. cit., p. 103.

²Op. cit., p. 13.

³Op. cit., pp. 225 ff.

⁴Op. cit., p. 403.

tendency to scurrilize and lampoon one's enemies as in the rest of Greece. . . . There can be little doubt that the Greeks themselves were right in regarding such lampooning and scurrility as the ultimate source of Comedy." The writer,¹ denying any religious connection in the beginnings of comedy, says that this drama originated when "in Attica some sort of rude farces were grafted on to the indigenous lampoons"; to this combination was later added a plot, "thus establishing for the first time in Attica true comedy, but in it the personal lampoon still remained a chief element."

These writers are at variance with each other on many points, but they all agree decidedly on the importance of the abusive element in the primitive ceremony which gave rise to comedy.

¹Ibid., p. 413.

CHAPTER III

PRIMITIVE CEREMONIES CONTAINING ABUSE

It is evident from the foregoing chapter that modern scholars in their theories of the origin of comedy place great emphasis upon the element of ridicule and abuse of the bystanders. Such ridicule, however, was not restricted to comedy but was very widespread in the general social and religious life of the Athenians. Ridgeway,¹ in his theory of the origin of Greek comedy, says, "It is certain that in every age, in every race, and in every community, there always have been those with a special sense for the grotesque and a natural bent for mocking at the weakness and foibles of their friends, neighbors, grave and reverend signiors, and especially of their personal enemies; it is equally certain that no particular part of Greece nor any particular town had a monopoly of this fundamental element, though in some towns, as at Athens and Megara, there might be a greater aptitude for humorous outbursts than in others." An investigation of the sources, therefore, may present certain aspects of Greek, and especially of Athenian life which will give a broader knowledge of the background, the source of this ridicule of the onlookers which came to play so large a part in the comic presentations of the Fifth century. This ridicule and abuse may seem very primitive and rustic in nature, something far removed from the pungent satire of the Fifth century, but nonetheless, therein lie the seeds which reached full growth years later in the caustic and

¹ Op. cit., p. 412.

bitter lampoons of Aristophanes.

Whether, therefore, comedy originated in religious rites, choral celebrations, or mere village revels, it may be granted for the moment that it was born at some gathering of the people in which a more or less accepted ceremony was followed. Characteristics which are dominant in these early crude performances and celebrations will be the ones which are likely to appear also in the first comedies when they are born and will most probably survive in one form or another when comedy has reached its final, finished phase.

All too little information is found in the literature concerning either the early forms of dramas or the early forms of folk celebrations. Aristotle, as has been said, states that comedy arose from the Phallic ceremonies.¹ Probably the procession in the Acharnians (263 ff.) is a good picture of such a ceremony. This passage will be discussed later on, but for the moment it may be suggested that had the hymn to Phales not been interrupted, as happens in the play, verse would have followed verse, all devoted to personalities.² Certainly the comus or village revel, of which the phallic procession is thought to be one form and which played so large a part in the life of the ordinary Athenian of early times, though very vague to us in its details, made definite use of a large amount of ridicule in its celebration.³

The locus classicus for information on this subject is Athenaeus.⁴ Quoting Semos the Delian as his authority, he first

¹Poetics 1449 A.

²Cf. Pickard-Cambridge, op. cit., pp. 238-39; Flickinger, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

³Cf. the importance given ridicule by Pickard-Cambridge, op. cit., pp. 225 ff., and Navarre, op. cit., pp. 245 ff., in their restorations of the comus.

⁴622 B (xiv. 16).

describes the Ithyphalloi,¹ who wear masks, and wreaths, and embroidered chitons, and sing a hymn to the audience from the middle of the orchestra. Then he tells of the Phallophoroi, who wear no masks, but a sort of plant-vizor, and wreaths, and cloaks. They also perform in the theatre, some entering by way of the Parodos and some through the middle doors. They enter singing a hymn in honor of the god, and when they are through, "then, running forward, they heckle whomsoever they choose (ἐτῶθαζον οὐς ἂν προέλοιντο), and they do this standing still. But the phallus-bearer goes straight on, smeared with soot."

This is a choral, non-dramatic performance. It is unlikely that it was in itself connected with the beginnings of comedy.² But the abusive element plays one of the most prominent parts therein, and consequently merits attention.

A quaint story is told by the Scholiast on Dionysus of Thrace.³ Comedy, he says, arose in the following fashion. Certain farmers were mistreated by some Athenian citizens. At bedtime, therefore, the rustics went to Athens, to the street on which lived the man who had abused them, and they told of their injuries, saying, "Here dwells so and so who did such and such a thing to certain farmers and brought undeserved injury upon them." The neighbors talked of this the next day, the wrong-doer was ashamed, and the misdeeds ceased. The Athenian officials, seeing

¹Pickard-Cambridge, op. cit., p. 233, mentions that the band of young Athenians who were called Ithyphalloi and who went about the city attacking and insulting prominent Athenians, mentioned by Demosthenes in liv. (Conon) 14, should not be confused with the group of the same name mentioned by Semos. The reference of Demosthenes, however, of which nothing further is known, is of some slight interest. It indicates another aspect of daily social life in which individual abuse was prevalent.

²Cf. Pickard-Cambridge, op. cit., pp. 234 ff.; Norwood, op. cit., p. 8.

³Kaibel, op. cit., pp. 12 ff.

how beneficial was this revenge of the farmers, had the farmers ridicule the ones who had harmed them in the theatre (ἐκέλευσαν τοὺς ἀδικουμένους μέσης ἀγορᾶς τοὺς ἀδικήσαντας κωμωδεῖν), where-upon wrong-doers were still the more ashamed at the disclosure of their acts, and the city as a whole benefited greatly. Then skilled poets joined the movement, and comedy was born. κωμωδία οὖν λέγεται ἡ ὅτι οἱ ἀπὸ κωμῶν συναγόμενοι ᾄδον ταῦτα, ἡ ὅτι ἐν κAIRῶ κώματος ᾄδον, the scholiast adds.

This account, of course, cannot possibly be true. But despite its naive explanation, it is of interest. Even at the late period in which this scholiast wrote the element of personal, satirical abuse of individuals was deemed so important a part of comedy that the entire explanation of the origin of comedy was built up around it.¹

Many prominent Athenian festivals contained this same element of abuse. Suidas says that in both the Festival of the Pitchers and the Lenaea "the revelers on the wagons jeered and mocked at those whom they met on the way."² In the Στήνια³ at which the return of Demeter was celebrated, "the women insulted each other by night." There was abuse in the Dionysiac processions.⁴ One of the best known instances is the canonical Jestings at the Bridge in the Eleusinian procession, which is probably referred to in the Iacchus Song in the Frogs.⁵ At this festival, Hesychius says (s. v. γεφυρίῃς καὶ γεφυρισταί), prominent men were

¹Photius, s. v. κωμωδεῖν: σκώπτειν; Suidas, s. v. κωμωδοποιός: ὁ σκωμμάτῃ τινα εἰσάγων κατὰ τινος.

²S. v. Ἀθήναια; cf. Photius, s. v. τὰ ἐκ τῶν ἀμαξῶν.

³Photius, Hesychius s. v.

⁴Harpocration, s. v. πομπείας καὶ πομπεύειν.

⁵416 ff., cf. infra, pp. 41 f.

mocked by name.¹

Religious institutions and rituals are apt to go back in form to remote antiquity, for because of their very nature they change, if at all, very slowly. To a great extent they preserve their traditional and original ceremonies. These statements of lexicographers, therefore, though late, are not to be disregarded on the grounds of date. Moreover, when the lexicographers, in defining a festival in a sentence or two at the most, devote the main part of their descriptions to the element of invective therein, one is justified in assuming that this was one of the most important characteristics of these particular ceremonies.

All these references, though several are of small importance and given but passing comment even in the sources, show how widespread and how prevalent was this characteristic of ridicule and abuse among the Athenians. This realization, in fact, leads Pickard-Cambridge² to say: "The ridicule of the bystanders, or the satirical allusions offer a very slender thread of connexion with comedy; for such ridicule occurred on many different occasions in Athenian life and, quite apart from the ritual employment of abusive language, it may be suspected that any occasion on which Athenians came together to watch a merry procession was unlikely to pass without a good deal of banter between the performers and the bystanders." Pickard-Cambridge is probably quite right in his remark concerning the prevalence of such ridicule. He is also quite probably correct in concluding that because of this very prevalence, this aspect cannot be con-

¹Frazer, Golden Bough, I, 279, gives many examples throughout the world of the beneficial significance of abuse and cursing in superstitions and especially in religions. Scurrility was always considered a protection against misfortune and indecency an aid to nature in her fertilizing work.

²Op. cit., pp. 239-40.

sidered as a decisive factor in determining the origin of comedy. But that it was an element, and an important element, in the sources, whatever they were, from which comedy arose cannot be doubted. The very fact that the word κωμῳδία is defined as ἡ ἐν μέσῳ λαοῦ κατηγορία, ἥγουν δημοσίευσις¹ and that the verb κωμῳδεῖν must normally be translated as "ridicule," "satirize," "libel," "lampoon," is convincing in itself. It is of value, therefore, to study this element as it appears in Old Comedy and see the use to which it was put by Aristophanes.

¹Bekker, Anecdota Graeca, II, 747, 10.

CHAPTER IV
DIRECT ADDRESS TO THE AUDIENCE

A. Remarks in the Peace

Personal satire, as expressed in direct remarks to the audience, is a distinctive feature throughout all the plays of Aristophanes. But before discussing the body of these isolated passages, a summary review of the Peace alone may first serve to clarify the nature of such remarks; for this play contains frequent examples of all classes of address to the spectators.

The Peace opens with a scene showing two servants mixing food for the giant beetle upon which Trygaeus, their master, hopes to fly to Zeus. Overcome by the unpleasant odor of the mixture, one of the slaves cries out (9), "O help me, scavengers, by all the Gods! Or I shall choke and die before your eyes." The scavengers were a recognized class at Athens. That the slave is appealing to members of this group present in the audience is borne out by his remark three lines farther on: "I am freed of one charge, at least, my masters(ἄνδρες): no one can say that I eat as I mix the food." A minute later he asks of the spectators:

Can any one of you, I wonder, tell me
Where I can buy a nose not perforated?
There's no more loathly miserable task
Than to be mashing dung to feed a beetle.

He goes on discussing the beetle at some length, and then continues:

Now I suspect some pert young witling there (τὸν
θεατὸν τις)
Is asking, "Well, but what's it all about?
What can the beetle mean?" And then I think
That some Ionian, sitting by, will answer,

"Now, I've nae doubt but this is aimed at Cleon,
It eats the muck sae unco shamelessly."
But I will in, and give the beetle drink.

With this remark the slave exits and his comrade resumes the speech to the spectators:

And I will tell the story to the boys,
And to the lads, and also to the men,
And to the great and mighty men among you,
And to the greatest, mightiest men of all.
My master's mad

He continues his explanation until Trygaeus enters the stage.

We see here a rather early form of the explanatory prologue. The actors address the audience almost at the beginning of the play, making mildly ridiculing remarks to them which the one slave climaxes by a direct insult at Cleon, the popular demagogue of the day, after which he leaves the stage. The other slave continues to talk to the spectators until Trygaeus appears. The spectators have been accepted by these two preliminary actors, who have recognized their presence and have explained the existing situation to them. With the entrance of Trygaeus, the action proper begins and is self-contained throughout the following scene until Trygaeus, mounted on the beetle, begins his flight to heaven. He says farewell to his children and then turns to the audience (150 ff.):

But you, for whom I toil and labour so,
Do for three days resist the calls of nature;
Since, if my beetle in the air should smell it,
He'll toss me headlong off, and turn to graze.

Here Trygaeus ends the scene with this charge to the audience, after which the man and the beetle rise in the air, probably swung from a crane. From this elevated position the rider looks out over the theatre and pretends to see someone in Peiraeus disobeying his orders:

Man! man in Peiraeus! you'll kill me I swear,
Committing a nuisance! good fellow, forbear!

And he continues with instructions to the man, ending with the threat of a fine of five talents if the fellow's actions have caused his flight to fail. These remarks act as a sort of interlude until the change of scene has been effected¹ when Trygaeus cries out (173-76):

Zounds! how you scared me; I'm not joking now.
I say, scene-shifter, have a care of me.
You gave me quite a turn; and if you don't
Take care, I'm certain I shall feed my beetle.

There follows a scene between Hermes and Trygaeus, after which War appears. This god is preparing to mix with pestle and mortar a huge salad, which symbolizes embroiling all the Greek cities in conflict. He first throws in the mortar the city of Prasiae, at which action Trygaeus, who is in hiding, remarks in an aside to the audience:

Friends (ἄνδρες), this as yet is no concern of ours,
This is a blow for the Laconian side.

War then adds in turn Megara, Sicily, Attica, and sends the slave to Athens for a pestle, which represents Cleon, with which to grind the mixture. Trygaeus now appeals to the audience:

What's to be done, my poor dear mortals, now?
Just see how terrible our danger is:
For if that varlet bring a pestle back,
War will sit down and pulverize our cities.

The slave returns saying that Athens has lost its pestle (for Cleon has recently been killed), at which news Trygaeus thanks Athena for her help. War sends to Sparta for another pestle, Brasidas, and again Trygaeus beseeches the audience:

Now is the crisis of our fate, my friends.
And if there's here a man initiate
In Samothrace, 'tis now the hour to pray
For the averting of--the varlet's feet.

But again the slave meets with failure, which causes Trygaeus to

¹Probably some sort of an elevated platform has been brought forth on which Trygaeus dismounts.

exult:

And well done! well done! Twin sons of Zeus!
Take courage, mortals: all may yet be well.

War leaves the stage and the scene ends. The humor throughout has lain in Trygaeus' remarks to the spectators. He assumes that the people are vitally interested in the outcome of the plot, he includes them in the action, asks them for aid at critical moments, and reassures them when the danger is past.

Trygaeus now calls forth the chorus, made up of Attic farmers, and the action of the play is once more self-contained and unbroken for several hundred lines while the farmers, Hermes, and Trygaeus rescue the goddess Peace, along with her attendants Mayfair and Harvesthome, from the pit in which War has imprisoned them. Hermes and Trygaeus carry on a dialogue about the joys of the land now that Peace has once again been restored, and Trygaeus ends the discussion by abruptly pointing to the audience (543 ff.):

Yes, and survey the audience: by their looks
You can discern their trades.

HERMES:

O dear! o dear!
Don't you observe the man that makes the crests
Tearing his hair? and yon's a pitchfork-seller;
Fie! how he fillips the sword-cutler there.

TRYGAEUS:

And see how pleased that sickle-maker looks,
Joking and poking the spear-burnisher.

HERMES:

Now then give notice: let the farmers go.

And now that the point of the episode has been made at the expense of indefinite individuals in the audience, the scene closes and another one begins. Once again the audience has been drawn into the action of the play and is pictured as being concerned with the outcome of the dramatic events.

Songs of welcome are next sung to Peace, and Trygaeus asks Hermes why the goddess was imprisoned. Hermes relates the development of the Peloponnesian War and the disastrous years Greece went through at that time. Trygaeus then asks of Peace herself (657 ff.):

But tell me, lady, why you stand so mute.
HERMES: Oh, she won't speak one word before this audience:
No, no; they've wronged her far too much for that.
(He pretends to listen to Peace)
Yes, good; that's their offence: I understand
Listen, spectators, why she blames you so¹

And Hermes proceeds to rebuke the audience for the Athenian failure to make peace after the siege of Pylos. Then he asks, "Who in the city loves her (Peace) the best and shrinks from fighting most?" "Cleonymus," is the answer, and this well-known individual is then ridiculed as a coward. "Who is it that now sways the Assembly-stone?" asks Hermes for Peace. "Hyperbolus," replies Trygaeus, and the goddess "turns away in anger from the people, for taking to itself so vile a leader." Scathing criticism of the lamp-maker demagogue follows. Here again the audience is drawn into the action of the play. Their presence, their past actions, and various ones of the individual members are portrayed as having an effect on the dramatic action, in a sense the opposite of what we saw happen in the preceding scene between Trygaeus and Hermes, where the two characters pretended that members of the audience were themselves affected by the outcome of the dramatic action.

This scene opens with rather mild banter of the audience as a group and then turns to much more bitter abuse of certain definite individuals, Cleonymus, Hyperbolus, Sophocles. Then Hermes gives Mayfair to Trygaeus to take to the Council as its bride, and Trygaeus remarks, "O happy Council to possess Mayfair!"

¹The "audience" here mentioned might conceivably be the chorus and Trygaeus who are present on the stage. Trygaeus in fact makes the defense to the accusations. But the charges are not very applicable to a group of Attic farmers; they are pointed and fitting only when directed against the Athenian citizens who are sitting in the theatre. In view of the many similar instances in which the spectators are so referred to, it is more than justifiable to understand them as the ones designated here; Knights 1209-10; Ecclesiazusae 888; Lysistrata 1219-20; Clouds 1437.

O what a three-days' carnival you'll have!" The Councillors would of course be sitting in the theatre in the seats reserved for them and these words would undoubtedly be spoken to them. Trygaeus then departs with Peace and her handmaidens and the scene closes on this note. As the actors leave, the chorus says:

Yes, go, and good fortune escort you, my friend;
Meanwhile the machines and the wraps,
We'll give to our faithful attendants to guard,
For a number of dissolute chaps
Are sure to be lurking about on the stage,
To pilfer and plunder and steal;
Here, take them and watch them and keep them with care,
While we to the audience reveal
The mind of our play, and whatever we may
By our native acumen be prompted to say.

The Parabasis follows. This is a direct break in the structure of the play, an interlude in which the poet, speaking through the chorus, defends himself and his comedies and heaps abuse on Cleon. He humorously asks the bald-headed men in the audience to vote that the prize be given him, since he is bald-headed as well and because of this common characteristic the others will bask in his reflected glory. Then he returns to his abuse, and ridicules Carcinus, Morsimus, and Melanthius, rival-poets of the day. With this the Parabasis ends.

The next scene begins with the arrival of Trygaeus and his companions on earth again. The hero's first words are (819ff.):

O what a job it was to reach the Gods!
I know I'm right fatigued in both my legs.
(Looking at the audience in surprise)
How small ye seemed down here! why from above
Methought ye looked as bad as bad could be,
But here ye look considerably worse.

Having created a laugh from the spectators at their own expense, he proceeds to greet his servant and an undisturbed scene follows between them. The servant exits, Trygaeus and the Chorus dialogue for a bit, and the servant returns to begin a new episode. Mayfair is now to be given to the Council as its bride. Trygaeus asks of

the audience (877 ff.):

Now, have you any there that I can trust?
One who will lead her safely to the Council?
Well, is there none can take her? come to me then;
I'll go myself, and set you down amongst them.

SERVANT: Here's some one making signs.

TRYGAEUS: Who is it?

SERVANT: Who! Ariphrades: he wants her brought his way.

TRYGAEUS: No: I can't bear his dirty, sloppy way;
So come to me, and lay those parcels down.
(Leads her forward towards the βουλευτικόν)
Councillors! Magistrates! behold Mayfair!
[He expatiates upon the delights of the maiden and concludes:]

You lucky Magistrate, receive Mayfair!
Just look, how pleased he seems to introduce her;
You would not though, if you got nothing by it,
No, you'd be holding a Reception day.

And the scene ends. Here the whole episode from beginning to end has been enacted with the group of Councillors in the audience, with an insulting reference to Ariphrades thrown in. As soon as Trygaeus has deposited the maiden with the Councillors, he returns to the stage and continues the more serious action of the play with the chorus, until the entrance of the servant in line 955 begins another scene. A sacrifice is to be made to Peace and Trygaeus tells the servant:

Now throw the corn amongst the audience.

SERVANT: There.

TRYGAEUS: What! thrown it out already?

SERVANT: Yes, by Hermes!
There's not a single man amongst them all
But has at least one corn, I'll warrant you.

TRYGAEUS: Aye, but the women?

SERVANT: If they haven't got one,

They'll get it by and by.

TRYGAEUS: Now, then to prayers¹

These remarks are thrown at the spectators at the beginning of the longer ceremony of sacrifice, and as soon as the abuse has been made the dramatic action proceeds unbroken up to the last line where Trygaeus tells the servant to take the sacrifice in-

¹ The point here lies in the double meaning of the word κριθήν. Scholiast: πρὸς τὴν κριθὴν παίζει, ὅτι τὸ τῶν ἀνδρῶν αἶδοῖον κριθὴν ἔλεγεν.

doors and slay it (1020):

And when you have slain it, bring the thighs out here.
There: now the sheep is--saved for the Choregus.

And with this final unexpected hit at the man who paid for the production of the play the scene closes.

Hierocles, an oracle-monger, now appears and protests that it is not yet time for the introduction of Peace. When he asks for a part of the sacrifice to eat, Trygaeus refuses him, but perversely invites the audience to partake (1115): "Come now, spectators, won't you share the mess along with us?" "And I?" asks Hierocles. "You? Eat your Sibyl," retorts Trygaeus and with the help of the servant he drives the man from the stage. Here the audience is spoken to merely for the sake of slight contrast, to emphasize the rejection of Hierocles' request. Once again the remark is made at the close of an episode.

A partial secondary Parabasis is now sung, and then several minor scenes occur, in all of which the dramatic illusion is unbroken until the final exodus song, the last two lines of which close the play with the customary invitation to the spectators to join in the feasting and celebration (1355-57):

Follow me, sirs, if ye will,
And of bridecakes eat your fill.

From this more or less detailed examination of the play, certain facts emerge. We now see that instances of direct speech to the audience, which are often called violations of the dramatic illusion, are in one sense of the term no violations at all. For Aristophanes has placed them cleverly and artistically, not in the middle of a scene as a break in a continuous action, but at the opening or the closing of an episode. Four scenes in this play open with an address to the audience;¹ six scenes close with

¹173-235, 657-728, 819-55, 956-1022.

such a remark;¹ two scenes both open and close in this fashion;² and six entire scenes are spoken directly to, or are played at the expense of the audience.³ Nowhere else are remarks of this nature made. The dramatic action in all the other scenes is undisturbed and unbroken. Actors may speak by name of men of the day who probably were sitting in the audience, but the remarks are not addressed to these men or to the other spectators about these men. The remarks are in keeping with the character who is speaking in the play; they are remarks which he might make normally if the scene, instead of being in a play and in a theatre, were in real life. No recognition is taken of the fact that the person named may be present. The violation of the dramatic illusion, if there is any at all, is only one of suggestion, the result of reminding the spectators of actual men and events of the day. If, as is almost invariably the case, the play itself is laid in contemporary Athens, such remarks are no violations at all; they are perfectly in keeping with the dramatic setting.

¹80-153, 520-50, 657-728, 956-1022, 1039-1126, 1311-57.

²657-728, 956-1022.

³1-59, 154-72, 236-88, 729-818, 868-908, 1127-90.

B. Abusive Remarks in the Other Plays

Not only would it be too arduous a task to outline each play in this fashion, but it would be rather a fruitless one as well. For the Peace, containing as it does the most instances of all classes of addresses to the audience, best illustrates the present thesis. The occurrences in the other plays may now be isolated and, as far as possible, grouped in classes. The most important class, and perhaps the oldest historically, are the remarks which are made to the audience as a group, or to certain unnamed, fictitious individuals who might be various ones of the spectators--remarks which in their extreme form are insulting abuse and in their mildest state are a sort of mocking ridicule and banter.

In the Clouds a debate takes place between Right and Wrong Logic (1088ff.). Wrong Logic asks from what class of citizens the Councillors are drawn; Right Logic admits they are from the punished or "probed" adulterers (ἐξ εὐρυπρώκτων). He admits the same about the Tragic Poets and the Orators. The argument continues:

W.L.: Look once more around the stage.
Survey the audience, which they be,
Probed or not probed.
R.L.: I see! I see!
W.L.: Well, give your verdict.
R.L.: It must go for probed adulterers (τοὺς εὐρυπρώκτους)
him I know,
And him, and him; the Probed are most.
W.L.: How stand we then?
R.L.: I own I've lost. Oh Cinaeds, Cinaeds take my robe!
Your words have won, to you I run
To live and die with glorious Probe,

"and he throws his cloak into the amphitheatre and takes his seat

with the spectators," remarks Rogers.

The whole point of this exchange is to make the audience the butt of the indecent joke. It should be remembered that the Councillors mentioned would be present at the play, sitting in the seats reserved for them.¹ Almost without a doubt all the tragic poets and the orators of the day would be in the audience. So even the introductory insults would find their marks, even if these individuals were not pointed out.² Then all pretense is thrown aside; Wrong Logic points directly to the audience, and in the face of this overwhelming proof of general depravity Right Logic admits his defeat and joins the opposite side. With this the scene ends.

In the Frogs (274-76) Dionysus greets his slave Xanthias after the latter's trip around the shore of the Acherusian Lake:

DIONYSUS: But tell me, did you see the parricides
And perjured folk he mentioned?

XANTHIAS: Didn't you?

DIONYSUS: Poseidon, yes. Why look! (Pointing to the audience)
I see them now. What's the next step?

XANTHIAS: We'd best be moving on.

Here again the mockery of the spectators is the sole reason for bringing in the brief exchange. It starts the scene off with a laugh. As soon as the remark has been made, the action proceeds forthwith.

A similar exchange occurs in the Ecclesiazusae (434-40) when Chremes returns from the assembly and tells Blepyrus of the speech made by a strange young man who, although they do not know it, is really Praxagora, Blepyrus' wife, in disguise.

CHREMES: So the lad went on,

¹Cf. Peace 877 ff. where Trygaeus gives Mayfair to the Council as its bride.

²It is hard to tell from our texts when any indications were made toward definite persons or places in the theatre. Sometimes this is shown by the deictic pronoun or adverb.

Speaking all good of women, but of you
Everything bad.

BLEPYRUS: What?

CHREMES: First of all he called you an arrogant rogue.

BLEPYRUS: And you?

CHREMES: Let be awhile. Also a thief.

BLEPYRUS: Me only?

CHREMES: And by Zeus, a sycophant.

BLEPYRUS: Me only?

CHREMES: And by Zeus, all our friends here (τωνδὶ τὸ πλῆθος).

BLEPYRUS: Well, who says nay to that?

And then Chremes goes on to report in detail the speech of Praxagora. With the words τωνδὶ τὸ πλῆθος Chremes undoubtedly points to the audience, since the men are alone on the stage and there would be little point in having them so refer to their figurative neighbors in the play. Now it is true that these remarks come in the middle of a much longer scene between the two old men. But they come at the moment in the scene when Chremes is beginning to repeat the speech of Praxagora. The preliminary exchange is over; the conversation is starting on a slightly different subject. So the slander is thrown in incidentally at the beginning of a scene of much greater length and importance.

The Parabasis of the Thesmophoriazusae (785 ff.) is a direct address to the audience, setting forth in argument form the Rights of Women versus the Rights of Men. There are humorous and ridiculing remarks made throughout the song, but in the Strophe the denunciation becomes quite bitter:

But this is a true description of you.
Are ye not gluttonous, vulgar, perverse,
Kidnappers, housebreakers, footpads, and worse?
.

But O for the Shafts, and the Thong of the Shield,
Which your Fathers in fight were accustomed to wield.
Where are they to-day? Ye have cast them away
As ye raced, in hot haste, and disgraced, from the fray!"

Then follows the Epirrhema in which the chorus discusses the position of women and thus ends its song.

A similar remark is made in the Frogs (779-83). The two slaves, Aeacus and Xanthias, are holding a discussion in the un-

derworld; Aeacus tells of the developments of the dispute between Aeschylus and Euripides:

AEACUS: The populace clamoured out to try
Which of the twain was wiser in his art.
XANTHIAS: You mean the rascals?
AEACUS: Aye, as high as heaven!
XANTHIAS: But were there none to side with Aeschylus?
AEACUS: Scanty and sparse the good, (Regards the audience)
the same as here (ὡςπερ ἐνθάδε).¹

This is a very pronounced break in the dramatic illusion. It occurs 45 lines from the beginning of the scene between the two slaves, 25 lines from the beginning of the discussion of Aeschylus and Euripides, and 30 lines from the end of the whole scene. The scene is laid in the underworld where the slaves are talking about the argument between the two great poets as to who should be ruler of the dead tragedians. Suddenly Aeacus recognizes the existence of the living onlookers in the theatre by throwing at them without warning, almost as an aside, a disparaging remark. The unexpectedness of the slur, heightened by its position in the discussion, insures a laugh from the onlookers.²

¹There is no point in interpreting ὡςπερ ἐνθάδε as applying to Hades since that has already been taken care of in the first half of the sentence. Modern editors have followed the Scholiast in interpreting it as a remark directly to the Attic theatre and the Athenian audience, which is undoubtedly correct.

²Cf. Plutus 98-99:

WEALTH: I have not seen the good for many a day.
CHREMYLUS: No more have I, although I've got my eyes.

Rogers, following the Scholiast, says he scans the audience and in view of the similar instances quoted here it is quite likely this is true. It should be remembered, however, that Chremylus is speaking to a blind man, and his remark is quite in keeping with his character and his situation in the play. It would be unlikely, however, that Aristophanes overlooked the opportunity to cast such a jibe at the spectators. Cf. also Ecclesiazusae 797-98:

I know these fellows (τούτους); voting in hot haste,
And straight ignoring the decree they've passed.

and Frogs 1013-15:

For just consider what style of men he received from me,
great six-foot-high

In the Knights, the Paphlagonian, who represents Cleon, enters the scene and immediately after comes the chorus of Knights who begin to attack and beat him. He cries out to the audience (255-57):

O my Heliastic veterans, of the great Triobol clan,
Whom through right and wrong I nourished, bawling,
shouting all I can,
Help me, by conspiring traitors shamefully abused
and beaten.

Thus begins one of the important scenes of the play. The rascally Paphlagonian appeals to the body of Athenian citizens before him, trusting they will follow him blindly as they have always done in the past. The implied insult to their intelligence would bring a laugh from the spectators and thus start the scene off merrily.

All of these instances have been more or less scurrilous abuse of the audience as a group or of uncertain, indefinite individuals present in the theatre.¹ The other classification which is connected with this one is the ridiculing reference directly to or about a definite individual called by name, a well-known personage who was famous for one reason or another among the citizens and who would probably be present at the performance. Sometimes the ridicule starts at the expense of the whole audience and then becomes bitterly pointed against a certain individual.

In the Plutus (794 ff.) the Wife asks the god:

Then won't you take the welcoming-gifts I bring?
PLUTUS: Aye, by the hearth within, as custom bids.
So too we 'scape the vulgar tricks of farce.
It is not meet, with such a Bard as ours,
To fling a shower of figs and comfits out
Amongst the audience, just to make them laugh.

Heroic souls, who never would blench from a townsman's
duties in peace or war;
Not idle loafers, or low buffoons, or rascally scamps such
as now they are (ἀσκηρ νῦν).

¹The passages from the Peace, quoted *supra* which would belong in this class are: 543 ff.; 657 ff.; 819 ff.; 877 ff.; 955 ff.

WIFE: Well said indeed: for Dexinicus there (οὗτος)
Is rising up, to scramble for the figs.

The audience is rather mildly ridiculed for its low taste; then the remarks are pointed by a direct reference to Dexinicus who, say the scholiasts, was a grasping, miserly individual. With this final taunt the characters enter the house and a complete change of scene follows.

In the Ecclesiazusae the women, disguised as men, are about to take over the assembly and are first practicing the speeches they will deliver there. One woman says (163-68):

I've thought of something very good to say.
'In my opinion, O assembled women,'--
PRAXAGORA: O monstrous! women, idiot, when they're men?
WOMAN: 'Twas all Epigonous (ἐπεῖνον); he caught my
eye (ἐπέσσε)
And so, methought 'twas women I harangued.

Here the woman practices her speech not on her women neighbors on the stage--otherwise the next remark could not follow--but on the theatre audience. The ἐπεῖνον and ἐπέσσε are deictic words.

Epigonous, an effeminate citizen of the day, is pointed out and used as the excuse for the speaker's mistake. Similarly, in the Clouds (353-55) Strepsiades says that the chorus in a presentation the day before became timid deer because they saw Cleonymus, the coward in battle, in the audience. Socrates replies that to-day the chorus sees Cleisthenes, an Athenian noted for his effeminacy, among the spectators and they therefore appear as women.

The passage just quoted from the Ecclesiazusae comes in the middle of a long scene between the various women before they go to the assembly. It is, however, carefully placed as the final remark in the preliminary conversation and rehearsal. Immediately thereafter Praxagora puts on the chaplet and delivers her long speech, which is the climax of the scene. The abusive and humorous reference to Epigonous marks the end of the introductory

dialogue and sets apart the important speech of Praxagora. Likewise in the passage just mentioned from the Clouds. The chorus sings a song as it enters the stage. Socrates and Strepsiades talk together for a short time, the philosopher explaining to the other the costume and appearance of the singers. When he has made his point clear, by ridiculing Hieronimus and Cleonymus, and has clinched his argument by commenting directly and insultingly about Cleisthenes, his student Strepsiades exclaims, "O then without fail, All hail! and All hail! my welcome receive," and the chorus returns the old man's welcome with its first pertinent remark in the play. As in the argument between Right and Wrong Logic, the direct mockery of one of the spectators furnishes irrefutable proof and ends the discussion. And as in the speech rehearsal in the Ecclesiazusae, this remark sets apart the introductory dialogue and the more important lengthy discussion which follows between the two old men.

The Peace, it will be remembered, opened with a long and rather rambling series of remarks to the spectators, made by the two slaves and serving the purpose of an introductory explanatory prologue. The same thing occurs in the Wasps (54 ff.). The slave Xanthias says to his fellow-slave Sosias:

Come, let me tell the story to the audience
With just these few remarks, by way of preface.
Expect not from us something mighty grand,
Nor yet some mirth purloined from Megara.
We have no brace of servants here, to scatter
Nuts from their basket out among the audience,
Nor Heracles defrauded of his supper,
Nor yet Euripides besmirched again;
No, nor though Cleon shine, by fortune's favor,
Will we to mince-meat chop the man again.
Ours is a little tale, with meaning in it,
Not too refined and exquisite for you,
Yet wittier far than vulgar comedy.
You see that great big man . . . he has a
 strange disease,
Which none of you will know, or yet conjecture,
Unless we tell: else, if you think so, guess.
Amyntas there (οὐτοσί), the son of Pronapes,

Says he's a dice-lover: but he's quite out.
 SOSIAS: Ah, he conjectures from his own disease.
 XANTHIAS: Nay, but the word does really end with--lover.
 Then Sosias here observes to Dercylus,
 That 'tis a drink-lover.
 SOSIAS: Confound it, no:
 That's the disease of honest gentlemen.
 XANTHIAS: Then next, Nicostratus of Scambon says,
 It is a sacrifice--or stranger-lover.
 SOSIAS: What, like Philoxenus? No, by the dog,
 Not quite so lewd, Nicostratus, as that.
 XANTHIAS: Come, you waste words: you'll never find it out,
 So all keep silence if you want to know.
 I'll tell you the disease old master has.
 He is a Lawcourt-lover, no man like him

Here the slaves select certain notorious individuals in the audience and pretend that each one attributes his own particular failing to Demus--Amynias gambling, Derculus drunkenness, Nicostratus superstition, Philoxenus moral depravity. The abuse of the spectators comes near the beginning of the speech, after which the speaker continues his explanation of the setting of the plot in more serious vein. This passage is a fore-runner of the explanatory prologues of later comedy which were regularly addressed to the audience.

The same device is used in the opening of the Birds, where Peisthetaerus and Euelpides are travelling along the road to the Land of the Birds. They have lost their way, and suddenly Euelpides says (27 ff.):

Now isn't it a shame that when we are here
 Ready and willing as two men can be
 To go to the ravens, we can't find the way.
 For we are sick, spectators, with a sickness
 Just the reverse of that which Sacas has.
 He, no true townsman, would perforce press in;
 Whilst we, with rights of tribe and race unchallenged,
 Spread both our--feet, and flew away from home.

Sacas was a person who in some way had his name illegally inscribed on the rolls of citizens without possessing the necessary qualifications. Euelpides makes a mocking reference to the man, speaking directly to the onlookers, and then goes on to describe the situation with which the play opens. This is another explan-

atory prologue, coming at the beginning of the play and opening with an uncomplimentary reference to the audience about some prominent law-breaker of the day.

There are in all, four explanatory prologues in the plays of Aristophanes. Three of these have been discussed, for they contain personal ridicule and abuse.¹ The fourth occurrence is in the Knights, where the two slaves are conversing together and Demosthenes asks Nicias (36 ff.):

Would you I told the story to the audience?
NICIAS: Not a bad plan; but let us ask them first
To show us plainly by their looks and cheer
If they take pleasure in our words and acts.
DEMOS.: I'll tell them now. We two have got a master,
Demus of Pnyx-borough, such a sour old man,
Quick tempered, country-minded, bean-consuming

Here as in the other occurrences the preliminary circumstances of the plot which the audience must know are set forth. But in this prologue there is no ridicule of individuals; the satire is more subtle than that. The slave, in an artless and open explanation to the spectators, presents to them a description of his master Demus, who is a portrait in caricature of the Athenian Demus, the Athenian people themselves. As has been said many times before, the comedies are filled with satire which is disguised as a part of the dramatic plot. But this passage is unique inasmuch as the actor, under the guise of describing directly to the spectators a leading character in the play, is actually ridiculing the citizens to their face. And this ridicule, as in the other prologues, opens the scene and the play.

The second Parabasis of the Knights begins (1264 ff.):

O what is a nobler thing,
Beginning or ending a song,
Than--Never to launch a lampoon at Lysistratus, scurvy
buffoon;

¹Wasps 54 ff.; Peace 43 ff.; Birds 30 ff.

Or at hearthless Thumantis to gird, poor starveling, in
lightness of heart
For lampooning worthless wretches, none should bear the
bard a grudge;
'Tis a sound and wholesome practice, if the case you
rightly judge.

From here the poet continues to assail with coarse insults various prominent men of the day. Aripkrades, Polymnestus and Oeonichus,¹ and Cleonymus are all attacked. It is interesting to note that Cleonymus, who is always called a coward (δῖψασπις) in later plays, is here pictured as a glutton (κατωφαγάς); his cowardice on the battlefield of Delium had not yet taken place. The speech ends with an especially violent and amusing attack against Hyperbolus, one of the leading politicians of the day. In this whole speech the poet has done nothing but assail men who in his estimation were depraved, justifying himself by the remark that such lampooning is a "sound and wholesome practice." This is perhaps one of the best examples of the Parabasis used as a weapon of violent ridicule and attack. It is interesting to note also that Aristophanes has himself spoken of delivering these attacks at the beginning and end of choral songs. To be sure, he immediately proceeds to ridicule certain men throughout the entire speech, but nonetheless, without attaching too much importance to the words, we may conclude that the poet is here speaking of a definite literary conceit which he found successful in arousing laughter.

In the Acharnians (836 ff.) Dicaeopolis and the Megarian leave the scene, and the chorus, alone on the stage, occupies the interval until Dicaeopolis' return with an interlude song addressed directly to the audience, in which they heap loathing and insults

¹Cf. Rogers note on line 1287 for argument that these two men were disreputable Athenians of the day and not men of antiquity.

upon various men in turn. Ctesias, Prepis, Cleonymus, Hyperbolus, Cratinus--not the comic poet but a young dandy of the day--Pauson, and Lysistratus are all assailed with bitter indecency. This song is connected slightly with the plot of the play, showing that these depraved characters cannot work ill in the abode of Dicaeopolis now that he has made his private peace, but the primary purpose of the speech is to attack these men, not to further the plot. Later in the same play (1150 ff.) the chorus is again left alone on the stage and sings a song invoking destruction upon Antimachus, a choregus who in some way or other had incurred the anger of the comic poets. The song ends with an unexpected prayer that one disaster may miss Antimachus and befall the Cratinus mentioned above. This song has no connection whatsoever with the action of the play; it is a deliberate attack against men of whom the poet disapproved. In both these instances, as soon as the song is ended the actors return to the scene and the dramatic action proceeds. These songs, especially the second one, are very reminiscent of the element of abusive personal satire so prevalent in the rural comus.

The Gephyrismos, or canonical Jestng at the Bridge, in the Eleusinian celebration was previously mentioned.¹ In the Iacchus Song in the Frogs (416 ff.) this traditional ceremony is preserved:

Shall we all a merry joke
At Archedemus poke,
Who has not cut his guildsmen yet, though seven years old;
Yet up among the dead
He is demagogue and head,
And contrives the topmost place of the rascaldom to hold?

Next Aristophanes lashes the effeminate vices of Cleisthenes and the dissolute Callias. There follows a brief exchange between

¹Supra, p. 19.

Dionysus, Xanthias, and the chorus, then a short stanza of fourteen lines concluding the hymn, and Aeacus enters the stage and a new scene begins. The long processional hymn, which contains abusive references in various parts, culminates at the end in the bitter attack by name against three prominent men. This song is self-contained; in it the chorus takes no recognition of the two actors on the stage. When they converse with them, they do not do so as a part of the chant. Therefore the song is related to the interlude songs just mentioned, and especially reflects the lampooning character of the native ceremonies.

There is a certain type of address to the audience which is scarcely scurrilous abuse. Rather, it is good-humored banter, poking fun at the public's taste, for instance. This is an Athenian characteristic which Aristophanes takes delight in ridiculing. The opening line of the Frogs is a question addressed by Xanthias to Dionysus:

Shall I crack one of those old jokes, master,
At which the audience never fail to laugh?

Then the two characters go through the list of all the standard jokes until Dionysus asks to stop before he becomes ill from disgust:

XANTHIAS: What! must I bear these burdens, and not make
One of the jokes Ameipsias and Lycis
And Phrynichus, in every play they write,
Put in the mouths of all their burden-bearers?
DIONYSUS: Don't make them; no! I tell you when I see
Their plays, and hear those jokes, I come away
More than a twelvemonth older than I went.

Here the banter begins with the audience in general, and develops into direct insults against rival comic poets.¹ Here also the scene opens with remarks to the audience. It is also, as has

¹It is interesting to note that in the contest in which this play, the Frogs, took first prize a play of Phrynichus was given second; cf. Hypothesis to Frogs.

been remarked before, the opening of the play, though it is not in the form of an explanatory prologue.

A similar remark opens a scene following a rather lengthy choral song in the Lysistrata (1216 ff.):

IDLER: Open the door there, ho!

PORTER: Be off, you rascal!

IDLER: What, won't you stir? I've half a mind to roast you
All with this torch. No, that's a vulgar trick.
I won't do that. Still if the audience wish it,
To please their tastes we'll undertake the task.

And in the Ecclesiiazusae (887-89) the Young Girl says to the ancient Hag:

Sing then, and I'll sing against you.
For this, even though 'tis irksome to the audience,
Has yet a pleasant and a comic flavour.

This remark is thrown in right at the beginning of the long scene which follows between the two characters, and once again the spectators are told that they cannot appreciate what is really pleasing and diverting.

A Herald comes to Peisthetaerus, ruler of Cloudecuckoo-borough, and tells how all the men in Athens have gone bird-mad. Among other things, he says the names of birds are now given to prominent citizens, and he gives a list of names with a bird-epithet for each, indicative of the characteristic of the individual (Birds 1292-98). Ten men are named in all, and the list ends with "While Meidias there is called the 'Quail'; aye and he's like a quail flipped on the head by some quail-filliper." The phrase Μεϊδίᾱς δ' ἔκεῖ can only have meaning if the speaker points or pretends to point at Meidias in the audience. The other men named were probably in the audience as well. One cannot tell whether or not he indicated them too. It is perhaps more humorous to conceive him listing the names as though in a report and then abruptly, as the climax and end of the account, turning and pointing directly to his last example. This speech takes up almost

the entire scene which closes a few lines further on.

A similar use of ἐκεῖ is found again in the Birds (164-70). Peisthetaerus is giving the birds advice as to how they may become more respected among mortals:

. . . . First don't fly about
In all directions, with your mouths wide open.
That makes you quite despised. With us, for instance,
If you should ask the flighty people there (ἐκεῖ)
'Who is that fellow?' Teleas would reply,
'The man's a bird, a flighty feckless bird,
Inconsequential, always on the move.'

Teleas is chosen as the outstanding man of the most fickle group of Athenians of the day. It is therefore a greater insult to be called "flighty" by Teleas than by anyone else, says Peisthetaerus. But not only is Teleas ridiculed; the speaker suddenly associates himself with the audience, he points to the people looking on (ἐκεῖ παρ' ἡμῖν) and makes an example from them. The violation of the illusion puts the point to his speech, and introduces the series of admonitions which he gives to the birds.

We have seen here how three types of addresses to the audience more or less merge one into the other. There is first the bitterly abusive and generally indecent remark which is directed at the onlookers as a group. Sometimes various unnamed individuals are presumably selected to be ridiculed. The second class is abusive ridicule by name of definite individuals, prominent men or well-known characters of the day who would be familiar to everyone in the audience. And lastly, there is a type of mild, rather derogatory and humorous banter of the spectators. All these groups of instances have good historical background. They are undoubtedly the outgrowth, the result of the influence of the scurrilous abuse which was so wide-spread and so dominant in folk-gatherings and celebrations.

Moreover, the conclusion reached in the study of the Peace

has now been confirmed. Aristophanes is never careless in his use of the address to the audience as a device of literary technique. The poet directly addresses the audience frequently at the very opening of a new scene.¹ Or he climaxes a scene or a long list with such a remark.² Even when the remark comes in the middle of a scene it generally contains the point of the immediate discussion and closes the subject at hand.³ Occasionally an entire episode is played at the expense of the audience, for additional vividness and humor. Parabases are always delivered directly to the audience, and most interlude songs of the chorus, when it is left alone on the stage, are sung to the spectators.⁴ These songs are generally not in keeping with the character of the chorus in the play, nor do they pertain to the dramatic action; instead they are filled with individual abuse.

These remarks to the audience are almost without exception humorous. As has been said before, the spectators highly enjoyed being ridiculed as a group and, oftentimes perhaps, individually as well. To bring discomfort and embarrassment to a single individual was nothing if by so doing the poet was assured of winning the pleasure and goodwill of the spectators as a group. Indeed, Aristophanes desired to discomfort the men whom he attacked. Such ridicule, therefore, was a pretty dependable device to start a scene off with a laugh or to close it on a note of merriment. Without complete comedies of Aristophanes' rivals, we

¹Knights 36 ff., 255-57; Wasps 54 ff.; Birds 27 ff., 164-70; Lysistrata 1216 ff.; Frogs 1 ff., 274-76, 1013-15; Ecclesiazusae 434-40, 887-89.

²Clouds 353-55, 1088 ff.; Birds 1292-98; Frogs 416 ff.; Ecclesiazusae 163-68; Plutus 794 ff.

³Clouds 353-55; Ecclesiazusae 163-68, 434-40.

⁴Acharnians 836 ff., 1150 ff.; Knights 1264 ff.; Thesmophoriazusae 785 ff.

shall probably never know how far this poet surpassed his contemporaries in employing this comic device. But we can appreciate nonetheless the vivid color and vigorous humor which he added to his dramas by his extremely subtle and skillful use of this form of satire. The poet himself is perhaps commenting upon this stylistic feature when he says in light-hearted fashion in the opening of the parabasis of the Knights (1264 ff.) that nothing is nobler at the beginning or the end of a song than to launch a lampoon at notorious individuals. Consciously or unconsciously, he has admitted that he makes his attacks at such moments.

C. Non-abusive Remarks

Aristophanes did not always ridicule, abuse, and insult the spectators. The poet was very desirous of winning the prize in the dramatic contest, and with this end in view he oftentimes praises and flatters the audience. Remarks of this nature are generally found in the parabasis of the play, where the chorus is speaking for the poet. In the Clouds (518 ff.) the poet begins the parabasis by saying: "O spectators, I will utter honest truths with accents free So may I be deemed a poet, and this day obtain the prize." He goes on to complain of unfair treatment in the past, when he has lost the contest to inferior poets; he tells of the many improvements he has made in his presentations, casting many a slur at his rival poets in passing: "Whoso laughs at their productions, let him not delight in mine. But for you who praise my genius, you who think my writings clever, Ye shall gain a name for wisdom, yea! for ever and for ever." He invokes the aid of the gods, and then returns to his plaint: "O most sapient wise spectators, hither turn attention due, We complain of sad ill-treatment, we've a bone to pick with you." The poet, it is true, is taking the audience to task for its indifference in the past, but the subtle flattery of terming it an action unworthy of their inherent discrimination and good taste would not be lost on the spectators. Similarly in the Wasps (1010 ff.) the chorus begins the parabasis:

But you, ye numberless myriads, stay
And listen the while to me.
Beware lest the truths I am going to say,
Unheeded to earth should fall;
For that were the part of a fool to play,

And not your part at all.

The chorus continues to praise the wit of the audience and to censure the critics for their failure to give the poet a prize in the previous year.

The last parabasis which has come down to us is that of the Frogs (675 ff.), which is but a partial choral song. The poet no longer seems to feel so keenly that he is unappreciated, and he praises the audience more wholeheartedly: "O see on the benches before us that countless and wonderful throng, Where wits by the thousand abide" And later on in the play (1109 ff.) the chorus sings another strophe and antistrophe:

Fear ye this, that today's spectators lack the grace of
 artistic lore,
 Lack the knowledge they need for taking
 All the points ye will soon be making?
Fear it not: the alarm is groundless: that, be sure, is
 the case no more
 Bright their natures, and now, I ween,
 Newly whetted, and sharp, and keen.
 Dread not any defect of wit,
Battle away without misgiving, sure that the audience, at
 least, are fit.

Throughout the parabases the poet alternately combines flattery and criticism, and always he asks that the audience grant him Victory. But such remarks are not restricted to the parabasis. In the Acharnians (442-44) Dicaeopolis, after begging a costume from Euripides, disguises himself and remarks: "The audience there will know me who I am, Whilst all the Chorus stand like idiots by, The while I fillip them with cunning words." And likewise in the Knights, Demosthenes says none of the mask-makers dare mould a mask to represent Cleon, "but our audience here Are shrewd and bright; they'll recognize the man" (230-33).

The poet courts the favor of the audience, by calling attention to the times he attempts to please them. Demus in the Knights (1209-10), when making a decision between the Sausage-

Seller and the Paphlagonian, the two rivals for his favor, remarks: "Well, what's the test will make the audience think I give my judgement cleverly and well?"¹ And in the Ecclesiazusae (571-81) the chorus requests of the principals:

The populace now
Requires an original new
Experiment; only do you
Some novelty bring from your store
Never spoken or done heretofore.
The audience don't like to be cheated
With humours too often repeated.
So come to the point, and at once: for delay
Is a thing the spectators detest in a play.²

And at the end of the play (1154 ff.) the chorus takes time before leaving for the traditional feast to say:

But first, a slight suggestion to the judges.
Let the wise and philosophic choose me for my wisdom's sake,
Those who joy in mirth and laughter choose me for the jests
I make;
Then with hardly an exception every vote I'm bound to win.
Let it nothing tell against me, that my play must first
begin;
See that, through the afterpieces, back to me your memory
strays;
Keep your oaths, and well and truly judge between the
rival plays.
Be not like the wanton women, never mindful of the past,
Always for the new admirer, always fondest of the last.

Aristophanes is very fond of extending humorous bribes to the spectators and judges to induce them to award him the prize. The amusing plea for victory in the parabasis of the Peace has been mentioned before.³ The poet sets forth his many virtues and then remarks:

It is right then for all, young and old, great and small,

¹Cf. Knights 37-39: "But let us ask them (the audience) first To show us plainly by their looks and cheer If they take pleasure in our words and acts."

²Cf. Wasps 1524-26: "Whisk nimble feet around you; kick out, till all admire, The Phrynichean kick to the sky; That the audience may applaud, as they view your leg on high," and the contrasting remarks in Lysistrata 1216 ff. and Ecclesiazusae 887-89, supra, p. 43.

³765-68; cf. supra, p. 27.

Henceforth of my side and my party to be,
And each bald-headed man should do all that he can
That the prize be awarded to me.

And he proceeds to explain that if the prize is granted him, all men who are bald, like the poet himself, will share his popularity. Bribery which is just as humorous but of a slightly different nature is found in the parabasis of the Birds (685 ff.). The birth of the birds and the many benefits which come to man from the birds are set forth to induce the audience to "take us for Gods, as is proper and fit." The birds promise to bestow on the spectators and their descendants health, wealth, happiness, plenty, peace, the revel, the dance, song, laughter, youth, and the "milk of the birds":

Ye'll be quite overburdened with pleasures and joys,
So happy and blest we will make you.

The second parabasis in the same play ends with an amusing combination of bribery and threat (1101-2):

Now we wish to tell the Judges, in a friendly sort of way,
All the blessing we shall give them if we gain the prize
today.

The judges will have Lauriotic owlets (money), live in stately temples (houses topped by an eagle pediment), steal with ease (aided by keen falcons), and enjoy an abundance of food (crops carried them by the birds):

But should you the prize deny us, you had better all prepare,
Like the statues in the open, little copper disks to wear;
Else whene'er abroad ye're walking, clad in raiment white
and new,
Angry birds will wreak their vengeance, spattering over
it and you.

In exactly the same way, the chorus of clouds, about two-thirds of the way through the play, sings an interlude song (Clouds 1115-30):

Now we wish to tell the Judges all the blessings they
shall gain
If, as Justice plainly warrants, we the worthy prize

obtain.

The blessing of moderate rain for crops is described; then:

But if any one amongst you dare to treat our claims with
scorn,
Mortal he, the Clouds immortal, better had he ne'er been
born!

and the threatened curse of flood and drouth follows.

Various characters in the plays frequently pretend to share their feasts and newly acquired possessions with the on-lookers (Ecclesiastusae 1141-48):

And all the audience who are well disposed,
And every Judge who looks not otherwise,
Come on with us; we'll freely give you all.
BLEPYRUS: Nay, no exceptions; open wide your mouth,
Invite them all in free and generous style,
Boy, stripling, grandsire; yea announce that all
Shall find a table all prepared and spread
For their enjoyment, in--their own sweet homes.¹

In two short interlude songs, the chorus in the Lysistrata (1043-71, 1188-1215) offers to share its wealth and delicacies of food with all the citizens in the theatre who wish them. At the end of both these choruses, the singers close on a note of humor by revealing, as in the previous quotation, that they have no intention whatsoever of fulfilling these promises.

While such remarks are humorous because of the sheer ridiculousness of the offer, nonetheless they are definite appeals for favorable votes. Similarly, the actors often call upon the spectators to witness their oaths or their deeds. Peisthetaerus asks for a treaty-pledge and the chorus of birds replies (Birds 444 ff.):

	I pledge it.
PEISTH.:	Swear!
CHORUS:	I swear on these conditions;

¹Cf. Peace 1115: "Come now, spectators, won't you share the mess Along with us?" and 1355-57: "Away, away, good day, good day; Follow me, sires, if ye will, And of bride cakes eat your fill."

So may I win by every judge's vote,
And the whole Theatre's.
PEISTH.: And so you shall.
CHORUS: But if I'm false, then by one vote alone.

The chorus wants the prize, by an unanimous decision if they are honest and by a single vote if they are false, a victory at any cost. Pheidippides, arguing with his father Strepsiades that a son has the right to beat his father, wins his point and Strepsiades in distress at the end of the discussion remarks to the audience:

Good friends! I really think he has some reason to complain.
I must concede he has put the case in quite a novel light;
I really think we should be flogged unless we act aright!¹

Just as the actors pretend to bribe the spectators in order to win their good favor, so they pretend to ask them for aid and information. Mention has already been made of the scene at the beginning of the Peace in which the servant asks the onlookers (20-21):

Can any one of you, I wonder, tell me
Where I can buy a nose not perforated?

and also the later scene in which Trygaeus, watching War mix the salad embroiling all the cities of Greece in battle, appeals frantically to the audience for help and assistance, and encourages and compliments them when the results are not disastrous.² The chorus of farmers in the Acharnians enters the stage for the first time in the play entreating the audience (206-7): "O inform me, if ye know, Where the man who bears the treaties managed from my sight to go." And Dionysus in the Frogs (297) cries out in fright: "My priest, protect me, and we'll sup together." He is

¹Clouds 1437-39; Strepsiades is not addressing the chorus, for he says ὄντορες, ἡλίκες, and the clouds are feminine and are termed Νεφέλαι; in 1453. The chorus in the Acharnians comment to the audience in like fashion on the success of Dicaeopolis, 836ff., 971 ff., 1015 ff., 1041.

²236-88; cf. supra, pp. 24 f.

here appealing to the priest of Dionysus, who occupied the place of honor in the center throne of the first row of spectators. When the Paphlagonian, representing Cleon, makes his first appearance on the stage in the Knights, he is beaten by the chorus of knights, and calls upon the citizen-dicasts in the audience to protect him (255-57):

O my Heliastic veterans, of the great Triobol clan,
Whom through right and wrong I nourished, bawling, shouting
all I can,
Help me, by conspiring traitors shamefully abused and
beaten.

In a similar fashion, Aristophanes makes use of the presence of the knights in his audience. In the Frogs (653) Aeacus is beating Dionysus and Xanthias alternately to determine which one is the god. Although a god should not feel pain, Dionysus is distressed by the blows and cries out, "Hi! Hi!" Aeacus: "Hello, what's this!" Dionysus (to cover his lapse): "Look at those horsemen, look!" It is inconceivable that Dionysus would point blankly off stage, for no humor lies in such a gesture. If, however, he pretended to point directly at some knights in the audience, the remark becomes a joke in keeping with many others in the plays.

The comic poet made very little pretense about the disguise of stage machinery and costume equipment. The characters in the plays speak openly of the eccyclema, the device used to wheel actors out on to the stage or to show interior scenes.¹ They refer to various parts of the stage by the technical terms of "entrance" and "exit" and "stage" without any attempt to preserve the dramatic setting.² Sometimes a word referring realis-

¹Acharnians 408-9; Knights 1249; Thesmophoriazusae 96, 265; Birds 92.

²Clouds 326; Birds 296; Wasps 1536-37.

tically to the actual theatre building is used παρὰ προσδοκίαν for the sake of humor, as in the Knights when the Sausage-Seller proclaims, "At the news which I bring let the theatre ring with Paeans of loud acclamation."¹ Similarly in the Peace (1021-22) Trygaeus instructs the servant to take the victim indoors:

And when you have slain it, bring the thighs out here.
There: now the sheep is--saved for the Choregus.

The reserved seats, the honor of proedria, and the rows of on-lookers are mentioned.² The actors even speak to the stage-hands and scene-shifters, once calling them by name,³ and they mention their costumes and masks.⁴ Oftentimes when asking for the prize, they comment on the excellence of their acting in an impersonal fashion.⁵ Once an actor, interrupted in his monody by a voice off stage, asks (Thesmophoriazusae 1058 ff.):

ECHO: O, who art thou that mournest for my woes?
Echo, the vocal mocking-bird of song,
I who, last year, in these same lists contended,
A faithful friend, beside Euripides.
And now, my child, for thou must play thy part,
Make dolorous wails.
MNES.: And you wail afterwards?
ECHO: I'll see to that; only begin at once.

The dialogue is sort of an aside conversation, in which the actors speak in their own persons and not as the characters they are portraying.

Aristophanes oftentimes employs another artistic conceit. Fond of pretending that his dramatic action is actual instead of imaginary, he achieves a mock realism of effect by contrasting

¹1318; in the Greek τὸ θεᾶτρον comes at the end of the sentence in the place of emphasis.

²Knights 162-63, 702-4; Clouds 206-17.

³Peace 174, 729-33; Birds 434, 656-57.

⁴Birds 16; Frogs 557; Knights 232.

⁵Clouds 1510; Thesmophoriazusae 972-75, 1227-30; Wasps 1516-37.

the life of his play with the tricks of the stage, as when Socrates instructs his students (Clouds 296):

Don't act in our schools like those Comedy-fools
With their scurrilous scandalous ways.

There are frequent instances of this device, which, by its very boldness, attempts to heighten rather than destroy the dramatic illusion. Nonetheless, the very suggestion which such a reference to plays and playwrights carries does of necessity violate the illusion, albeit in a rather backhanded manner.

Remarks to the audience of the nature discussed in this chapter are not nearly as pointed or humorous as the ridiculing and abusive addresses. They contain, however, a decided element of humor, and it is perhaps for this reason that Aristophanes has placed these remarks also at the opening or the closing of a scene or an episode. Many scenes begin¹ and end² in this fashion. And aside from the parabases, several interlude songs of this nature are sung by the chorus.³

This type of address to the audience has no historical background as does the scurrilous lampoon. It would be a natural development from satire and ridicule, for it also contains the element of humor, but it would not arise until comedy had attained a more or less finished literary form, the performance of which had become part of a contest. Such remarks are made primarily for the sake of humor and good-will; even the directions to the

¹ Acharnians 206-7, 408-9; Knights 37-39, 162-63, 255-57, 702-4, 1209-10, 1318; Clouds 326; Peace 20-21, 174, 729-33; Birds 16, 92, 296; Thesmophoriazusae 96, 1058 ff.; Frogs 557.

² Knights 225-33, 1249; Clouds 206-17, 1437-39, 1510; Wasps 1536-37; Peace 1021-22, 1115, 1354-56; Birds 434, 444 ff., 856-57; Thesmophoriazusae 265, 1227-30; Frogs 297; Ecclesiazusae 1141-48, 1154 ff.

³ Acharnians 836 ff., 971 ff., 1015 ff.; Clouds 1115-30; Lysistrata 1043-71, 1188-1215; Thesmophoriazusae 972-75; Ecclesiazusae 571-81.

stage-hands are quite unnecessary and are delivered only to make the spectators laugh. The references to the theatre, actors, and plays as such, which are disturbances that do not go beyond the environment of the theatre, are a more casual device for humor than the abusive references and, unlike the abusive references, they do not have the additional purpose of ridiculing public or private faults. But both classes of remarks are characterized by an informal frankness which as a result puts the actors and the audience on something of the same plane, creating an interplay of action which increases the interest and enlivens the humor of the poet's comedies.

CHAPTER V
THE EFFECT OF ARISTOPHANIC SATIRE

Probably the first question which arises from the discussion of the preceding chapter is what effect did this direct ridicule have. How did the audience as a whole react to it, how did the individuals satirized by name feel about it, and how did the Athenian state receive mockery of its leaders and of itself as a body politic? Before answering these questions, one statement must be reiterated. The passages previously discussed represent only one phase of the satire and ridicule found in the comedies of Aristophanes. To discover the effect of these direct, abusive references to the audience, we must discuss the effect of comic satire as a whole. Whether this satire is incorporated in the plot or thrown in as a violation of the dramatic illusion, the effect, aside from the matter of technique, will be one and the same.

Open satire and invective is of necessity closely connected with the general freedom of speech throughout the community. And it was freedom of speech in which the Athenians took especial pride.¹ Theoretically, every citizen had the right to speak in the assembly and to set forth in full any views which he might hold on any question. But in actual practice this was hardly the case. For Athens discriminated between freedom of speech (ἰσχυροπία) and license of speech (παρρησία). "The Athenians took precautions to safeguard freedom of speech by disquali-

¹Cf. supra, pp. 1 ff.

fying, or otherwise punishing, citizens who abused it. The provisions fall into two classes. First are those intended to deprive unworthy men of the right to advise and influence their fellow-citizens in public The other provisions were intended to punish overt acts, such as deceiving the people, giving bad advice, and promoting inexpedient or unconstitutional legislation."¹ But not only were there these indirect methods of restricting general freedom of speech. There were also libel laws, the earlier of which goes back to the legislation of Solon, the later of which, of uncertain date, is somewhere around the end of the Fifth century.² These laws were state laws, applicable to all the citizens. Since the early Solonian law explicitly forbade slander (κακῶς λέγειν) during festivals, presumably the comic poets were bound by this restriction. It is obvious to even the casual reader of Aristophanes, however, that this was not the case. For, as is evident from the passages quoted in the preceding chapter, the comic poets were allowed extreme liberty in their personal attacks. Isocrates recognized this tolerant attitude toward the stage when he said that if he were a comic poet he might fearlessly make remarks unfavorable to the people, remarks which as an orator he hesitated to make.³

Even in ancient times, however, there was much talk of various laws prohibiting attacks upon individuals by name in the comedies.⁴ Little, if any, importance can be attached to such a remark as that of Cicero, who says that it was permitted by Greek law to speak by name of whomsoever the poet wished in his come-

¹Bonner, op. cit., p. 84; cf. pp. 67-85 for a complete discussion of freedom of speech in Athenian public life.

²Cf. infra, p. 62 for fuller discussion of these libel laws.

³viii. 14.

⁴Schol. on Dionysius of Thrace in Kaibel, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

dies¹ or the contrary statement in the Pseudo-Xenophontic Constitution of Athens² that "the Athenians do not permit the people to be made the subject of comedy nor to be ill-spoken of." These are only vague, general statements, and the writers cannot have any definite laws in mind. As a matter of fact, the people are often ridiculed, as in the Knights where "Demos" is an important character, or are ill-spoken of, as in the Peace where they are severely criticized for several political acts. The writers probably have in mind instead of legal measures a normal moral force which would prevent a ridicule too scandalous or too defamatory.³ There are other references, however, which cannot be dismissed in such a summary fashion.

The scholiast on the Acharnians 67 mentions a decree passed in the archonship of Morychides in 440 B.C. which prohibited the comic poets from assailing individuals: Εὐθυμένους: οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἄρχων ἐφ' οὗ κατελύθη τὸ ψήφισμα τὸ περὶ τοῦ μὴ κωμῳδεῖν, γραφὲν ἐπὶ Μορυχίδου· Ἰσχυσεν δὲ ἐπὶ Γλαυκίνου τε καὶ Θεωδώρου. This is the earliest of such bills of which we know, and it appears to have been repealed three years later in the archonship of Euthymenes. In line 1150 of the same play, Aristophanes ridiculed a certain choregus, Antimachus by name, and the scholiast here says that Antimachus had carried a law to the effect that no one was to be ridiculed by name in comedy, and that by so doing he caused many of the poets not to bring out plays. The next law is mentioned by the scholiast on the Birds 1297, where it is stated that in the year 416 B.C. Syracosius proposed

¹De Rep. iv. 10; cf. Horace Ars Poetica, l. 283.

²ii. 18.

³Cf. Ridgeway, op. cit., p. 414 and Croiset, Aristophanes and the Political Parties at Athens, p. 50, n. 1, and Starkie, Acharnians, p. 244.

a decree forbidding personal burlesque. This is virtually a re-enactment of the decree of 440 B.C.

The comments of these grammarians, however, cannot be accepted on their face value. The evidence for the decree of Morychides seems to be the most trustworthy. There is nevertheless much discussion about it. As Starkie remarks,¹ "the phrase $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \mu\eta\ \kappa\alpha\mu\phi\delta\epsilon\iota\nu$ has caused more 'throwing about of brains' than any other four words in the scholia of Aristophanes." Norwood² says, "There can be no doubt concerning this (decree): the Scholiast who reports it uses unfaltering language that shows he had a good authority on his desk." Norwood suggests that since the war between Athens and Samos fell within this three year period, it might have been considered necessary to suppress anything that could embarrass the government. There is, however, no proof that any such restriction existed or was even attempted during the Peloponnesian War when the danger for Athens was much more acute.³ Norwood concludes that the Morychides decree was an actual experiment that was felt to have failed. Ridgeway⁴ also accepts this decree as an authentic one which was probably passed with the approval of Pericles but repealed shortly after because of the dislike of the Athenian audience for the insipid productions which resulted. Oppe⁵ mentions the law, but adds that we can tell nothing about it except that it concerned comedy. This scholar, in fact, rejects all the laws as highly improbable if not impossible

¹Op. cit., p. 243.

²Op. cit., p. 26.

³Starkie, op. cit., p. 244, and Radin, op. cit., p. 220, also account for this law as due to the political and economic status of Athens. The same objection still applies, however.

⁴Op. cit., pp. 418-19.

⁵The New Comedy, pp. 7-8.

Croiset¹ accepts the law as a measure of the Periclean party.

Modern scholars in general reject the validity of the Antimachus decree.² Personal satire was at its height at the time of the Acharnians and the following plays indicate no change of attitude. The scholiast is evidently attempting unsuccessfully to explain an obscure reference. Opinion differs, however, on the decree of 416-415 B.C., supposedly passed by Syracosius. Norwood³ rejects it, as does Croiset⁴ and Oppe,⁵ all of them arguing from the internal evidence of very prevalent individual abuse in the plays and fragments of the period immediately following the alleged decree. Ridgeway⁶ seems undecided, for he admits personal abuse continued but he feels that comedy nonetheless had to furl its sails and that the absence of a parabasis in the Lysistrata and Thesmophoriazusae is a significant indication of some repressive measures. Modern historians, on the other hand, unanimously accept the decree as authentic. Edward Meyer⁷ and Busolt⁸ regard the bill as the work of the radical party, while Curtius⁹ considers it the result of the oligarchical foes of Alcibiades. Grote¹⁰ does not mention the decree of Syracosius, although he accepts the law of 440-437 B.C. as valid. On the whole, one must conclude that the historians accept the laws because they fit into their historical theories and not because they find proof in the

¹Op. cit., p. 51.

²Norwood, op. cit., p. 27; Oppe, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

³Op. cit., pp. 27-28.

⁴Op. cit., pp. 118-19, 130.

⁵Op. cit., p. 8.

⁶Op. cit., p. 421.

⁷Gesch. des Alterth., IV, 523.

⁸Griech. Gesch., III², 1349.

⁹History of Greece, III, 365-67.

¹⁰Op. cit., VIII, 325-35.

literary sources themselves.

Another theory has been advanced by Radin, who accepts the authenticity of the Morychides decree but rejects the Antimachus law. He thinks that comedy was bound by the general laws of libel, previously mentioned, which were safeguards on general freedom of speech.¹ The early law of Solon forbade slander (κακῶς λέγειν) of the dead at any time and of the living "in temples, courts of law, public offices, and during festivals."² The fine for such a crime was five drachmas. There is no evidence that such a law was ever repealed. Radin believes, however, that it was not enforced because no one would take the trouble of a lawsuit for a sum which in the time of Solon was rather large but, due to changing money values, by the latter half of the fifth century had come to mean nothing at all. We know of another libel law, however, which in effect at least revised the Solonian law. In this decree certain words were declared actionable and "unsayable" (ἀπόρρητα). The date of this law is unknown, although it certainly was in effect in 384 B.C.³ One of the most famous "actionable words" on the list was that of "shield-thrower" (ρίψασπις, δσπισδαποβλής), a coward who threw away his shield and fled in battle. Now Cleonymus is ridiculed many times by Aristophanes as a ρίψασπις. But in the Birds, produced in 414 B.C., the following lines occur (287-90): Peisthetaerus: "O Poseidon, here's another; here's a bird of brilliant hue! What's the name of this, I wonder. Hoopoe: That's a Glutton styled by us. Peis.: Is there then another Glutton than our own Cleonymus? Euelpides: Our Cleonymus, I fancy, would have thrown his--crest away" (πῶς

¹Radin, op. cit., pp. 221 ff.

²Plutarch Solon xxi.

³Lysias x. 6 ff.

ἄρ' οὖν Κλεώνυμος γ' ὣν οὐκ ἀπέβαλε--τὸν λόφον). Instead of using the word "shield" which the audience expected, the poet has said "crest." He is avoiding the use of an actionable word in order to keep within the new law which, says Radin, is not only the law of Syracosius but also the general libel law. Radin combines the evidence which we have of a famous libel law containing a list of actionable words and the remark of a scholiast about the law of Syracosius which in some way restrained comic license and declares them to be one and the same.

This is an attractive theory, but the supporting evidence is not strong enough. Radin overlooks the truth that a word παρὰ προσδοκίαν is infinitely more humorous than its alternative. For, if this Syracosius-libel law, passed shortly before 414 B.C., were the cause of the softened remark in the Birds, how does one then explain the line in the Wasps (592), produced in 422 B.C.: εἴτ' Εὐαθλος χῶ μέγας οὔτος Κολακώνυμος ἀσπίδαποβλήσῃ: "Evathlus, and He! the loser of shields, the fawning, the great Cowardonymus."¹ Κολακώνυμος is made up of κόλαξ Κλεώνυμος, suggests Blaydes. Here the poet is certainly not endeavoring to avoid actionable words, otherwise he would not have had Xanthias say, at the beginning of the play (15 ff.): Methought a monstrous eagle came flying towards the market-place, and there seized in its claws a wriggling brassy shield (ἀσπίδα), and bore it up in triumph to the sky, and then-- Cleonymus fled off and dropped it. Sosias: Why then, Cleonymus is quite a riddle. Xanthias: How so? Sosias: A man will ask his boon companions:

τί τούτων ἐν γῇ τ' ἀπέβαλεν κἄν οὐρανῷ
κἄν τῇ θαλάττῃ θηρίον τὴν ἀσπίδα;

¹ Starkie suggests "Flatteronymus"; cf. Blaydes, ed. of Wasps, p. 289, for similar puns on proper names.

κολακώνυμος in line 592 is used for κλεώνυμος and combined with ἀσπίδαποβλήs in exactly the same way in which κλεώνυμος is used with ἀπέβαλε--τόν λόφον in the Birds in place of ἀπέβαλε--τήν ἀσπίδα merely for the sake of a pun, a word παρὰ προσδοκίαν to create additional humor and cause a laugh. Surely no more importance than this can be attached to it, and it is quite insufficient as proof of a recently enacted libel law.

There are other vague references to legislative measures against license of speech in the comedies, none of which have even as much of a case as the instances just cited.¹ The conclusion is obvious. No decree restricting freedom of speech on the comic stage, with the probable exception of the Morychides law in 440 B.C., can be accepted with any certainty whatsoever.

It was long considered that the satire and ridicule of the comic poets of the old comedy had a very powerful and beneficial effect upon the Athenian society and the Athenian state of the Fifth Century. Much emphasis was laid on remarks such as that of Socrates in the Apology² where the defendant speaks of the prejudice caused by the misrepresentation of his character by Aristophanes as one of the hardest things against which he had to contend. Plutarch³ seems to speak of the powerful effect of the slander indulged in by the comic poets against Pericles and his friends. But it should be remembered that in the one instance the speaker is on trial for his life, a time when great oratorical exaggeration should be expected, and in the second instance the writer, some five centuries after the period of which he speaks,

¹Tzetzes in Kaibel, op. cit., pp. 14-15, 20, 28; Schol. on the Frogs 404.

²18D, 19C-D, 31D.

³Pericles xiii.

is drawing his conclusion from passages in the plays which he has at hand and not from first-hand observations in the Fifth Century. And so a very great doubt has arisen as to the importance of the position of the comic poets. Many of the men who bore the brunt of the poets' satire were the political leaders of the city, the strongest men in the Athenian state. It stands to reason, if the remarks of the poets really carried weight with the people and harmed the man they ridiculed, the statesman would have taken steps to protect himself against further attacks. As a matter of fact, this is what actually did happen in certain cases. We get vague remarks about a few poets being punished in one way or another by the men whom they satirized. But this is always primarily a personal and an individual thing; the punishment is exacted privately and not publicly in the name of the state. The nearest case we know of which charged public damage to the state was the accusation against Aristophanes after the production of the Babylonians and this resulted in favor of the poet. Moreover, of the many prominent men who were bitterly attacked from the stage, proportionately only a few are mentioned as exacting or attempting to exact any form of personal satisfaction. The truth of the matter appears to be that while the comic poets were something of an annoyance at times, they were not considered seriously. They undoubtedly often angered the men whom they ridiculed and thus made personal enemies. But there was certainly no universal public disapproval of satire on the part of the audience which was also the citizen body. The people received the comic attacks with much enjoyment but considered them of little serious weight.

The demagogue Cleon is undoubtedly the most viciously attacked figure in all the plays of Aristophanes. Not only did the poet bitterly disapprove of Cleon the politician and of the polit-

ical class which he represented, but his feeling toward the man went far beyond general satire and ridicule; it developed into a personal hatred of the man himself.¹ Despite insufficient references, we can reconstruct this feud with some degree of certainty as far as the main points are concerned. Aristophanes attacked Cleon in the Babylonians, a play he produced in 426 B.C. The demagogue evidently suffered very bitter abuse in this drama² and he felt that this time the poet had gone too far, especially since the play had been presented at the City Dionysia, when the allies were present, and Cleon considered he had been made ridiculous not only in the eyes of Athens but of the entire Athenian Empire as well. To the best of our knowledge, Cleon accused Aristophanes of "having spoken ill of the city in the presence of strangers," and of having "insulted public officials, elected or chosen by lot."³ We do not know what sort of a penalty such a charge as this carried, but at any rate Aristophanes seems to have escaped unharmed.⁴ Croiset suggests that the poet's escape from punishment was largely due to the fact that the Athenians had become so

¹ Rogers, Intro. to Knights, pp. xxvi-xxvii, does not believe there was any personal feeling between the two men. He thinks Aristophanes hated Cleon only because of the political policies which the latter advocated. This probably was the situation at the very beginning, but it seems obvious that the feeling soon became personal.

² For reconstructions of the plot see Croiset, op. cit., pp. 40-44; Norwood, op. cit., pp. 282-87.

³ Achar. 377 ff., 502 ff., and scholiasts on the passages.

⁴ Croiset, op. cit., p. 50, thinks the penalty was most probably quite a severe one but Aristophanes was acquitted when the case came to trial. Grote, op. cit., VI, 488, says the only punishment such a charge could carry would be a small fine but that we know no details because the case never came to trial. This divergence of views only emphasizes the deep obscurity in which all the details of this affair are hidden. Grote comments, however, that it may be as a result of this charge that three of the next four of Aristophanes' plays were presented at the Lenaea, and the fourth, the Clouds, did not deal with political or state affairs.

well-accustomed to all the audacities of comedy that they no longer attached great importance to them. And this conclusion seems most sound. Cleon was one of the most powerful men of the day. Surely with his influence he could have succeeded in punishing the poet for the liberties which the latter had taken with him had the case been considered of serious consequence. A later occurrence bears out this viewpoint. Cleon is not directly attacked in the Acharnians, which appeared in 425 B.C. Aristophanes thanks the people for saving him from the charges of Cleon, he makes various scurrilous remarks at the politician in passing, but the plot and the characters do not deal at all with the man. The poet is evidently slightly chastened. But in the following year, Aristophanes brought forth the Knights and, with renewed courage, he directs against Cleon the bitterest ridicule of his career, picturing him as a vulgar and rascally slave who in the end is completely overthrown and disgraced. One must remember at just what period in Athenian history this took place. Cleon, in the preceding year, had gained his greatest triumph with the capture of Pylos and was at the height of his popularity. The Knights was produced in February of 424 B.C. when Cleon as the hero of the day for the first time was enjoying his right of proedria in the theatre. And now we find that the people, after enjoying the play to such a degree that they gave it the first prize, two months later elected Cleon general! How impossible this would have been had the dramatic attack been considered of serious importance. The incident shows very clearly how little the people were influenced by the theatre in their public political life.¹

After this especially bitter attack, Cleon once again took steps to check Aristophanes. But this time he used differ-

¹Croiset, op. cit., p. 93, makes the same observation.

ent methods, and brought forth a γραφή ξενίας against the poet, charging that he had fraudulently used the title citizen.¹ We have no information as to the developments of this charge. From a remark of the poet's in the Wasps (1284 ff.) we may be justified in assuming that Aristophanes found he was this time in real danger and could count for no support on the people who had applauded the very remarks for which he was now being attacked. He was frightened and evidently made some private settlement with Cleon, the terms of which were hardly to the poet's credit. At any rate, the next year in the Clouds Aristophanes steers clear of all political affairs and concentrates his satire upon Socrates.

The foregoing discussion is a very brief treatment of an obscure and much-discussed question. But from the details mentioned, one may perhaps draw certain logical conclusions concerning the influence of Aristophanes on the public. It must be admitted, however, that it is impossible to make any definite statement concerning the effect of comic satire. No one in the present day can determine with absolute certainty how much the Athenians of the Fifth century B.C. were influenced by the dramatic poets, for that influence might be of a very subtle and inconspicuous but nevertheless decided nature. Even the few facts we do know which bear on this situation can be interpreted in various ways. Cleon, at the time when he was most bitterly attacked in the Knights, may have been so powerful that he did not need to fear the insults hurled at him from the stage. The extreme democrats would of course not be influenced; the extreme conservatives would approve of an attack which upheld and did not alter their

¹ G. Gilbert, Beiträge zur innern Geschichte Athens, pp. 193-94, argues successfully that this charge was made after the Knights and not after the Babylonians as a scholiast states.

views. How many moderates there were, not definitely aligned with either party, who would be influenced by such scurrilous ridicule to oppose Cleon, will never be known. The preponderance of the radicals was evidently still sufficient to outweigh opponents. Cleon's public charges against Aristophanes, unless they are attributed entirely to personal pride, would indicate that the demagogue, even at the height of his power, felt it necessary to silence the hostile poet. But one wonders why he did not do so in a more decided fashion if he were really afraid Aristophanes would turn the citizens against him. There was the ancient law of Solon, evidently still in force, which explicitly forbade slander "during the festivals." The five drachmas fine, however, in case Cleon successfully appealed to this law, would probably have caused the poet little discomfort. Furthermore, the ancients, like the moderns, disapproved of libel suits. "The plaintiff in such suits was regarded as mean and litigious."¹ Doubtless Cleon acted wisely in not accusing Aristophanes under this statute.

One wonders, however, why Cleon did not use some simpler method than a cumbersome legal charge. The selection of the poet to compete at the festivals rested entirely in the hands of the archon, elected annually by lot. Why did not the powerful Cleon use his influence with this official to prevent the selection of Aristophanes? To be sure, the archon was accountable at his audit for all his acts in office, but a charge of partiality in the selection of poets would have been very hard to prove. For there were many excellent writers of the day, as witness the frequent award of first prize to other dramatists than Aristophanes. The applicants were so numerous and of such high literary rank that it was said that to be granted a chorus--the technical term for

¹Bonner, op. cit., p. 74.

selection as a competing poet--was equivalent to winning a victory.¹ As Haigh observes,

the task imposed upon the archon of deciding between the rival claims of the dramatic poets must have been a very difficult and a very invidious one. Even if he acted with the best intentions, he could hardly avoid giving offence. One archon refused a chorus to the great poet Cratinus; another gave a chorus to a certain Cleomachus in preference to Sophocles.²

Even if the archons in certain years were hostile to Cleon, surely at some time in this period the demagogue would have been able to influence this official. But there is no indication that he ever used such tactics. Aristophanes was selected to present a comedy every year from his first appearance in 427 B.C. until Cleon's death in 422 B.C., and in only one of these, the Clouds, does he completely omit insulting references to the demagogue.³

Now if insulting satirical references to individuals were found only in Aristophanes and directed by him mainly against Cleon, it would be impossible to draw any conclusion as to their effect. But this scurrilous lampooning was recognized even by the ancients as the outstanding universal characteristic of Old Comedy. And Cleon is only one of the many men of the day so attacked.⁴ Aristophanes assuredly felt a strong personal hatred of Cleon as a political leader and as a man. But probably not even he, and certainly not his contemporary comedians, would have made

¹Suidas, s. v. χορὸν δίδωμι.

²Op. cit., p. 50. Haigh is incorrect in his last remark. The fragment of Cratinus, in Meineke (op. cit., p. 10, II, No. 2), states that the chorus was given to the "son of Cleomachus" in preference to Sophocles.

³There are two bitterly abusive references to Cleon in the Clouds, 549 ff. and 586 ff. But both of these occur in the Parabasis, which was written after Cleon's death when Aristophanes revised the play, and not in 423 when the play was produced. Cf. Rogers, Intro. to Clouds, pp. xii ff. for indications in Parabasis of date later than 421 B.C.

⁴La Rue Van Hook, "Crime and Criminals in the Plays of Aristophanes," Class. Jour., XXIII (1927-28), 275-85.

such bitter attacks had they been exposing themselves to lawsuits and punishments. For even in Athens, the city of the greatest freedom of speech, it is too much to expect that prominent and powerful men would sit calmly by and see themselves ridiculed before the populace, if as a result their careers were threatened and their influence lessened. Yet, with the exception of the Aristophanes-Cleon feud, little action seems to have been taken against the poets. Alcibiades is supposed to have been ridiculed by Eupolis in one of his plays, the Βάρται, and to have taken vengeance upon the poet by drowning him in the sea.¹ And there is a reference in the Frogs (367-68) to a sort of backhanded revenge. The chorus is singing the famous hymn to Iacchus and warns the profane to stay away from the Procession of the Mystics. Among the people thus excluded is:

The public speaker who once lampooned in our Bacchic feasts
would, with heart malign,
Keep nibbling away the Comedians' pay.

The "Comedians' pay" is the amount of money which was awarded to each of the three competing poets. Evidently some orators (the scholiast mentions Archinus and Agyrrhius) were ridiculed by the comic poets and took revenge by using their influence to have this sum of money cut down. This again is a personal affair, resulting from a desire for punishment, but it is to be noted that the orators did not resort to any legal suit for libel. On the whole the poets seemed to enjoy a certain security, a certain immunity from the charge of slander. And such immunity could re-

¹There are various versions of this story, none of which can be relied upon at all; cf. Platonius and Tzetzes in Kaibel, op. cit., pp. 4, 20-21, 28. Certain other vague instances are mentioned by various scholiasts in which private citizens undertook to exact punishment from poets who attacked them on the stage. These remarks are far too uncertain and untrustworthy to discuss here.

sult from either of two conditions. Were the comic poets thought to possess a critical faculty so keen and beneficial for the citizens and the state that they should not be bound by the laws which governed the ordinary individual? Nowhere in the literature is there any evidence to support such a view. Or were the comic poets considered the source of great enjoyment in the theatre but not worthy of serious consideration as critics of the men and events of the day? This seems to be borne out by the sources and to be by far the more correct view. The primary aim of comedy was to create laughter. If the poet accomplishes this, no matter at whose expense, he is forgiven for all the liberties he may have taken. Aristophanes' vigorous ridicule and abuse of their popular favorite were greatly enjoyed by the Athenian people, but his remarks carried little weight when the citizens themselves came to deal politically with the same man. Comic political satire played no vital part outside of the theatre. J. W. White¹ very forcibly sums up this view:

Aristophanes wings the shafts of his incomparable wit at all the popular leaders of the day. . . . But he drove no one of them from power; there is little evidence, indeed, that he damaged their influence or even disturbed their brazen self-confidence. Cleon, when the poet's rebellious personal abuse became even in his judgment indecent, promptly brought him to his knees.

And Norwood² expresses the same view:

Observing this spirit and method (of satire), together with the fact that none of the statesmen thus assailed lost a jot of power or reputation, we realize the feeling of Athenians about both politics and art. They perceived clearly the bearing and value of each: they did not pull down Cleon because they saw that Aristophanes was a great poet; nor did they belittle Aristophanes because they were for Cleon.

It is safe to conclude, therefore, that while a certain

xiii. ¹Intro. to the English Version of Croiset, op. cit., p.

²Op. cit., p. 26.

amount of personal influence was exerted against satire by name on the comic stage, this influence was never at any time of very great importance. Private legal suits of one nature or another or possibly the fear of personal punishment at the hands of the men who were ridiculed may perhaps have caused the poets to make their attacks somewhat less pointed and less vigorous. Other events were taking place, however, which were of greater consequence than personal intimidation in bringing about a change.

It has now been shown that although there was probably one-determined effort to restrict freedom of speech on the comic stage by a prohibitive decree, this effort was made in the early days of comedy, proved to be a failure, and was recalled. Subsequent attempts in the following decades to pass similar bills, if there were any at all, seem to have met with even less success than the first one. Individual citizens by private action exerted at the most only a slight influence. Personal satire flourished on the comic stage and met with great approval on the part of an audience who enjoyed it in the theatre but considered it of no critical weight in the assembly or the council. Nevertheless, a change took place in comedy, a change which was brought about not by legal measures or public disapproval but by natural political and economic changes within Athens itself. With the downfall of the Athenian state at the end of the Peloponnesian War, the vigorous and imaginative Athenian spirit was broken. There was no longer a powerful city to engross the interest and arouse the pride of the people. Attention turned more and more to man as an individual and to a critical view of life and society. The Comedy of Manners was being born.¹

¹ Cf. Oppe, op. cit., pp. 13-15; Norwood, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

It is perhaps for the same reason that at this very time another type of comedy rose to prominence with the loss of interest in political themes. In Sicily at the beginning of the Fifth century Epicharmus, Phormis, and Deinolochus were writing plays which, as far as we are able to judge, were mythological burlesques and travesties. Political satire and personalities seem to have been completely absent.¹ This type of comedy was carried on by Crates, who wrote in Athens around the middle of the century and who, according to Aristotle,² "was the first of the Athenians who dropped the invective style and framed dialogues and plots of a general (non-personal) character." After Crates similar plays were written by Pherecrates. It seems that all through the second half of the century there were produced at Athens comedies of sheer imaginative fantasy; but these were submerged and overshadowed by the popularity of the more vigorous and colorful comedies of political satire. Cratinus won his first crown with the Odysseis, which was evidently a mythological travesty, and it is of especial interest to note that this victory took place during the period of the so-called Morychides decree forbidding personal satire on the comic stage.³ And in the same way, when political satire fell into disfavor at the end of the century, whether through censorship, spiritual change, or economic pressure, mythological fantasy immediately predominated.⁴

¹Cf. Pickard-Cambridge, op. cit., pp. 380-415.

²Poetics 1449 B 6.

³Meineke, op. cit., p. 28, No. XVI.

⁴Croiset, op. cit., p. 118, believes that even a few years earlier during the period of 421 to 414 B.C. when Athens was in a state of political confusion and upheaval, Aristophanes turned to "literary criticism, mythological parody, or pure extravaganza." This is probable theory, although there is no direct evidence to prove it. Certainly his Aeolosicon, Cocalos, and Plutus, all of about the same later period, were mythological parodies. Meineke, Historia Comicarum, pp. 283-84, gives a long list of titles of

The economic status of the citizens was another cause of change. There were no longer many wealthy individuals to defray the cost of lavish productions with large choruses.¹ The combination of this economic and intellectual change is reflected most clearly in one outstanding development in comedy. The chorus plays less and less part in the plays and the parabasis is gradually omitted. It is impossible to distinguish between these two developments, to say that either the loss of the chorus did away with the parabasis or the omission of the parabasis made the chorus unnecessary. Doubtless the effect of one upon the other was mutual. The changing ideas of the people and the loss of private wealth developed together and had a simultaneous effect respectively upon the parabasis and the chorus of comedy.

With the loss of the parabasis, the poet's most powerful weapon for satirical attack was taken from him. But from this it must not be assumed that personal ridicule ceased forthwith. Individual satire continues through the period commonly known as Middle Comedy, but it is not the unrestrained, free, and vigorous satire found in the plays of Aristophanes up to 405 B.C. Butler² says Middle Comedy "merely replaced the invective formerly levelled against public men by a gentle raillery of poets and philosophers." This is perhaps too extreme a statement, for evidences of personal satire are found in this period,³ but, as well as one

mythological and supernatural plays of the period 400 to 330 B.C., proving how much more prevalent this type of drama became when political satire weakened.

¹Platonius, op. cit., p. 4. J. Denis, La Comédie Grecque, p. 330, says the chorus was done away with because the wealthy men, who paid expenses, were the ones attacked and under the guise of poverty, they carried out their personal wishes, that is, destroyed the element which ridiculed them.

²Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art, p. 354.

³P. E. Legrand, New Greek Comedy, pp. 23-31, cites many instances of satire of public men which occur even in New Comedy.

can judge from the remaining fragments, it is a satire which for the most part is contained within the play itself, for the satire as expressed in the direct address to the audience dies out almost entirely. But the other type of address to the audience continues, not the pointed invective, but the requests for information, for aid, for the good-will of the spectators, for their approval for the prize, or for their participation as witnesses of various deeds on the stage. Information is imparted to the audience, explaining the action and the plot, and from this the explanatory prologue develops and becomes an established feature of the dramatic structure of the later plays. The external influences within Athens itself which killed off direct satire had no effect on this other phase, that of mere appeal or reference to the spectators. This is the only form of speech to the audience which is preserved in later Greek comedy and in Roman, European, and English drama. The poet's abusive satire by name of men present in the theatre before him has vanished.

